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THE FOREST PICNIC. (*See page* 123.)

The Aimwell Stories

By Walter Aimwell

Gould & Lincoln

The Aimwell Stories.

WHISTLER;

OR,

THE MANLY BOY.

BY

WALTER AIMWELL,

AUTHOR OF "OSCAR," "CLINTON," "ELLA," ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

THE object of this book is to portray the character of the MANLY BOY — a character that never fails to inspire love and esteem, if only it be natural and genuine. That a youth may still be a real boy in his tastes, his pursuits, and his feelings, — as every young lad certainly ought to be, — and yet exhibit something of true manliness in his spirit and deportment, will, it is hoped, be made manifest to the youngest mind, in the story of WHISTLER.

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"PRECEPTS MAY LEAD, BUT EXAMPLES DRAW."

"THE AIMWELL STORIES" are designed to portray some of the leading phases of juvenile character, and to point out their tendencies to future good and evil. This they undertake to do, by describing the quiet, natural scenes and incidents of every-day life, in city and country, at home and abroad, at school and upon the play-ground, rather than by resorting to romantic adventures and startling effects. While their main object is to persuade the young to lay well the foundations of their characters, to win them to the ways of virtue, and to incite them to good deeds and noble aims, the attempt is also made to mingle amusing, curious, and useful information with the moral lessons conveyed. It is hoped that the volumes will thus be made attractive and agreeable, as well as instructive, to the youthful reader.

Each volume of the "Aimwell Stories" will be complete and independent of itself, although a connecting thread will run through the whole series. The order of the volumes, so far as completed, is as follows:

I. OSCAR; OR, THE BOY WHO HAD HIS OWN WAY.
II. CLINTON; OR, BOY-LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.
III. ELLA; OR, TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.
IV. WHISTLER; OR, THE MANLY BOY.
V. MARCUS; OR, THE BOY-TAMER. (*In Preparation.*)

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WHISTLER.

CHAPTER I.

A VACATION JOURNEY.

THE steamer's bell is pealing forth its last call. The huge, hot engine, as if impatient of delay, seems hissing at every joint, while the dark clouds that roll up from its smoke-pipes tell of the activity of the sweltering firemen below. The hawser is cast off. A tardy passenger or two are hurried over the gangway, and their baggage sent after them with more celerity than care. A carriage, driven at a furious rate, is coming down the wharf, and a man's head and arm are thrust out of

the window,—the arm "sawing the air" in a most vehement manner. But his gesticulations are in vain. The gangway is drawn in on deck; the wheels slowly move; the steamer gently swings away from her moorings; and by the time the carriage is abreast of her, six yards of foam-covered water separate the would-be passenger from the crowded deck. A general half-suppressed laugh from the crowd on the wharf and the steamer reminds the unhappy straggler that there is something ridiculous, as well as provoking, in being a little too late; and, seeking refuge in the carriage, he is leisurely driven off, to be again laughed at, perchance, when he reaches the home he had lately left in such hot haste.

The steamer has now got clear of the vessels moored around her, and begins to move with greater speed. So easy is the motion, it would not be difficult for those on board to imagine that the wharf itself had hoisted sail, and parted company with the steamer, to take a turn about the harbor on its own account. Little groups on shore and on board the boat are exchanging farewells by the waving of hats and handkerchiefs. But soon the distance becomes too great

for recognition; wharves and warehouses mingle together; the city assumes a crowded and compact look, and finally resolves itself into that beautiful panorama which Boston presents when viewed from the sea. Even this view soon fades, and is lost; for the steamer is now far down the harbor, gallantly ploughing her way through the dark-blue waters.

Among the passengers who were enjoying the scene from the upper, or hurricane deck, might have been seen a gentleman and three children, who appeared to be intent upon missing no object of interest. The largest of the children was a bright and pleasant looking boy of fourteen. His name was William Davenport; but he was frequently called Willie, and still oftener Whistler, by his young associates. This latter name he acquired when several years younger, being indebted for it to his whistling talents, which were really quite clever. He rather liked the nickname; and, indeed, had become so accustomed to it, that even "Willie" did not sound quite natural, and "Bill" was

altogether out of the question. You must not suppose, however, that he was one of those whistling bores who give our ears no rest from their shrill pipings, either in house or in street. On the contrary, he was rather chary of his music,—perhaps more so than he would have been but for his nickname, which put him on his guard against spending too much of his breath in this manner. But, then, he *could* whistle beautifully when he chose to; and, as he had a quick ear for music, he caught all the new and popular airs of the day, which made his performances still more pleasant to the listener. Whistler we shall call him, therefore, in imitation of his comrades. He belonged in Boston, and was now on his way to a distant town in Maine, where he was to spend his summer vacation with the family of his uncle.

The gentleman who was with Whistler was Mr. Preston. He was a stout, sun-burnt, and plainly-dressed man, and was on his way home from a visit to Boston, with his eldest daughter, Emily, a girl of thirteen. The other girl, who was a few months younger, was Ella Preston, a cousin of Emily, who lived in Boston, and was now on her way to her uncle's home

in Brookdale. It was in this same town that Whistler's uncle lived; and being well acquainted with Ella, he had arranged to make the journey in company with her little party.

It was a mild August evening, and the sea was calm. Mr. Preston and the children remained upon the deck until the supper-bell sounded, when they went down into the cabin, and found a long table spread, around which the hungry passengers were crowding and pushing, without much regard to manners, or even decency. It was with some difficulty that Mr. Preston procured seats for the children; and even then the difficulty was but half overcome, for it required a good deal of effort, not to say rudeness, to obtain enough to eat, so ravenous and selfish were the company, and so limited was the supply upon the table. The meal was swallowed, and the cabin vacated, in about ten minutes. Shortly after, as Whistler was walking about, he overheard a few remarks between two gentlemen, that set him to thinking. From their appearance, and their peculiar accent, he concluded they were foreign gentlemen, travelling for pleasure.

"You did not witness the feeding of the animals?"

said one of the gentlemen, who had just come up from the cabin.

"No," said the other, "I have no taste for such exhibitions. I took the precaution to drink my tea before I came on board."

"Well, sir," added the first speaker, "I've breakfasted with the Turks, I've dined with the Arabs, I've supped with the Chinese, and I've eaten with nearly all the nations of Europe; but, sir, I must say that I never met with such a greedy, scrabbling set of gormandizers as I have found in this country. Why, sir, they seize and devour their food like wild beasts. They shovel it down whole, sir, just as a dog bolts his meat. I only wonder that these Yankees do not dispense with knives and forks altogether. Yes, sir, those implements of a civilized table seem altogether out of place in their hands."

This was all that Whistler heard. The unpleasant American habit which so disgusted this gentleman, and which is often glaringly conspicuous in our hotels and steamboats, has been justly censured with great severity by foreigners who have visited us. Whistler had himself observed the rude and greedy conduct at

the table; but he supposed such scenes were always enacted when large numbers of people got together to eat. Now, however, he had learned that it was a peculiarly American characteristic; and, perceiving how it was viewed by intelligent and well-bred foreigners, his pride and patriotism were both touched, and he made up his mind that he would never be guilty of such rudeness, either at a public or a private table.

The air was now becoming damp and chilly, and little could be seen beyond the steamer's decks, save the occasional flash of some distant lighthouse. The passengers began to disappear, some seeking out sheltered nooks in the stern, and others retiring to the saloons and berths. Mr. Preston gave Emily and Ellen in charge to the stewardess, who conducted them to their berths in the ladies' saloon; while himself and Whistler soon after turned in to their own quarters in the gentlemen's cabin. The saloons were lined on each side with berths arranged in three tiers. Each berth was furnished with bedding, and screened in front by a drapery curtain. The two selected by Mr. Preston, though not favorite ones in their location, were the best that were not engaged when he bought

his tickets. One of them was an upper berth; and, as Whistler was the lightest and nimblest of the two, it was assigned to him, while Mr. Preston took the other, directly beneath him.

Following the example of others, Whistler put off his shoes, jacket and shirt-collar, and climbed into his lofty and narrow sleeping-place. Here, partially concealed by his curtain, he amused himself by watching the movements of his fellow-passengers, and listening to their remarks. When Mr. Preston, who had been reading a newspaper, got ready to retire, he picked up Whistler's shoes from the floor, and told him to put them on a shelf over the berth, if he did not want "Boots" to get them. This personage, he afterwards explained, was a colored man, who gathered up all the boots and shoes he could find in the night, and cleaned them, charging each of the respective owners a ninepence (the ninepence is twelve and a half cents in New England) for his services. As Whistler's shoes did not need to undergo this process, his friend was probably justified in thus interfering with the legitimate business of the aforesaid "Boots."

The novelty of his position, the glare of the saloon

lamps, and the noise of the machinery, made it rather difficult for Whistler to get to sleep. The ocean was so smooth, however, that he felt no symptoms of sea-sickness; and he was very well contented to lie awake in his berth, so long as he was not troubled with this distressing malady, from which he had once suffered quite severely while sailing in the harbor. But, in spite of all disturbing influences, he was favored with several good naps towards morning, from one of which he awoke, and discerned the gray light of morning through a small window over his berth. He lowered himself down from his elevated bed, and went on deck, when he found that the steamer had already entered the river, the banks of which were scarcely visible through the heavy mist with which the atmosphere was loaded. Ella and Emily soon made their appearance, and declared that their first night on the ocean was anything but disagreeable. The fog rapidly disappeared before the sun; and, as they advanced up the river, the scenery became more interesting, so that their attention was constantly occupied, until Mr. Preston informed them that they had reached their landing-place.

Our travellers were still forty miles from Brookdale; but the rest of the journey was to be by land. On landing, they went directly to the village tavern, where they found a good breakfast awaiting them, to which, however, they could devote but a very few minutes, for the stage coach was waiting. Having made as large a draft on the driver's patience as they deemed prudent, they took their seats in the vehicle, and resumed their journey. For a while, the children found much to interest them in the country through which they passed; but it soon became an old story; and before they had climbed half of the hills that separated them from Brookdale, the inquiries were frequently heard, —

"How far have we got to go, *now*, Mr. Preston? Haven't we come more than half way? Shan't we get there before noon?"

As the stage coach did not pass through Brookdale. passengers for that village were obliged to leave it at a place called the Cross Roads, about five miles distant, and find their way over as best they could. It was noon when our party reached this stopping-place. As they alighted, a boy about fourteen years old stepped

up to Mr. Preston, who introduced him to Ella and Whistler as Clinton Davenport. The two boys were cousins; but they had never seen each other before. It seemed that Clinton, knowing they were expected, had gone over to the Cross Roads after them, with a wagon. A drive of five miles through a pleasant road brought them to their journey's end. They were in Brookdale.

CHAPTER II.

LOOKING ABOUT.

DINNER was on the table when Whistler arrived at Mr. Davenport's, and he found his uncle and aunt, and his little cousin Annie, ready to welcome him to their hospitalities. These, with Clinton, constituted the whole family. The young stranger soon felt quite at home in their society. He was much pleased with his cousins at first sight, for he had never seen either of them before. Annie, who was about seven years old, was a beautiful child, with golden curls and fair blue eyes, and a face full of gentleness and affection, She seemed to be the pet of the household. Clinton, though but a month or two older than Whistler, was a stouter and taller boy, and his browned skin and hardened hands told that he was not unacquainted with labor and out-door exposure. He had, moreover, an intelligent,

cheerful, and frank expression of countenance, that could not help prepossessing a stranger in his favor. The parents of these children Whistler had previously seen at his own house, and he had always numbered them among his favorite relatives.

Whistler's first movement, after dinner, was to make an inspection of the premises. He found that his uncle's farm lay at the base of a range of hills, and embraced a wide extent of land, a good part of which seemed to be under skilful cultivation. The house itself was set back a few rods from the street, and was pleasantly situated, with its front towards the south. It was a snug, plain-looking building, a story and a half high, with a kitchen and wood-shed attached in the rear. A noble oak tree, in front, afforded a grateful shade; and climbing roses and honeysuckles were trained around the front door, giving a neat and tasteful aspect to the cottage. In the rear, upon an elevated pole, was a perfect fac-simile of the house, in miniature, erected for the accommodation of the birds; and there never was a spring-time when this snug tenement failed to secure a respectable family as tenants for the season. On the next page is a view of the premises.

The barn, which the picture is not large enough to take in, was a short distance from the house, on the left. It was much larger than the cottage, and attached to it were buildings for the hens and pigs.

Clinton, who had been busy, now joined his cousin, and offered to accompany him around the premises.

"This is what we call the shop," he said, opening the door into a small room adjoining the pantry.

"Why, what a snug little place! and what a lot of tools you have got!" said Whistler.

"Father used to be a carpenter before he went to farming," added Clinton, "and he has always kept a set of tools. They are handy in such a place as this, where carpenters are not to be had."

"I suppose you work here some, don't you? If I had such a place, I should spend half my time in it," said Whistler.

"Yes," replied Clinton; "I use the tools a little. There's a windmill I'm making now; but I don't know when it will be finished. I have n't much time to work in the shop in summer."

"Clinty made this cart for me," said Annie, who had followed the boys; and she pointed to a neat little wagon.

"Did he? Why, he is a real nice workman," said Whistler.

"And he made the vane on the barn, and the bird-house, too," added Annie.

"Can't you think of something else that I made, Sissy?" said Clinton, laughing at the pride Annie evidently took in his ingenuity.

"Yes," she promptly replied; "he made the arbor over the front door."

"Why, Clinton, you *are* a carpenter, sure enough!" said Whistler. "I should think you might almost build a house; I mean a real house, not a bird-house."

Clinton smiled at this rather extravagant estimate of his mechanical skill, and led the way towards the barn, through which he conducted his cousin, from the cellar almost to the ridge-pole. The hayloft was very large, and was nearly filled with new-mown hay, the fragrance of which was delightful. Swallows were darting in and out of the great door, and gayly twittering among the lofty rafters, where they had made their nests. A large quantity of unthreshed grain, bound up in sheaves, was stacked away on the main floor, in one end of the barn.

"There's a good lot of straw," said Whistler, as they passed by the grain.

"And something besides straw, too; that is rye," replied Clinton.

"Is it rye?" said Whistler. "Well, I'm just green enough not to know straw from grain, or one kind of grain from another. Father told me I should make

myself so verdant that the cows would chase me, and I don't know but that he was right."

"They laugh about country people being green, when they go to the city," said Clinton; "but I guess they don't appear much worse than city folks sometimes do in the country. I don't mean you, though," he added; "for you haven't done anything very bad yet."

Whistler broke off a head of rye, and found concealed beneath the bearded points several hard, plump kernels, that had a sweet and pleasant taste. Following his cousin, he then visited the pig-pen, which was behind the barn, and connected with a portion of the barn cellar. Half a dozen fat porkers were lazily stretched about, in shady places, presenting one of those familiar groups that, if they do not appeal to the artist's sense of the beautiful, *do* appeal most forcibly to the plain farmer's sense of lard and "middlings." If not picturesque, they are decidedly *baconesque*, which some people consider much better.

"Now you must go and see my biddies," said Clinton; and he led the way to a large hen-coop, near the piggery.

"Are these *your* fowls?" inquired Whistler.

"Yes, they are all mine," replied his cousin. "Father gave me all of his fowls, five years ago, and I have managed them just as I pleased ever since. I have to find their food, and I have all their eggs and chickens. Even the eggs mother uses she has to buy of me."

"That is a first-rate plan," said Whistler. "I should think you might make lots of money in that way."

"This is n't all," added Clinton; "I have a flock of turkeys, and a lot of ducks, besides. The turkeys are off, somewhere; they roam all over the farm. The ducks are in that little house down by the brook; we 'll go and see them by-and-by."

"I should think I was rich, if I owned so many creatures," said Whistler. "But you have to buy corn for them, — I suppose that takes off the profit, does n't it?"

"I have n't bought a bushel of corn since the first year I had them," replied Clinton. "Do you see that cornfield, just beyond the brook? That is *my* field.

I planted and hoed it myself, and I shall have all the corn that grows there."

"But how did you come by it? — did you buy the land?" inquired Whistler, more astonished than ever.

"No, I don't own the land," replied Clinton. "Father has got more than he can cultivate, and he lets me have the use of that piece for nothing. He helps me plough and harrow it, too; but I have to do everything else myself. If I want any manure, I pay him for it. If the corn does well, I shall have enough to carry all my fowls through another year. There will be a lot of corn fodder too, that I shall sell to father for the cows; and I have a lot of pumpkins scattered in among the corn, that will be worth something in the fall."

"Well, you 're a real farmer, as well as a carpenter, that 's a fact," said his cousin. "How I should like to be in your shoes! — and not in yours, either, but in another pair just like them. Come, don't you want a partner? I'll buy in, and we 'll start a new firm — 'C. & W. Davenport, Farmers, Poultry Dealers and Carpenters.' Won't that sound tall! What will you sell out one half of your business for? I have n't

much capital, and don't know much about the business; but I'll try to make myself useful."

"I'm afraid you would get sick of the bargain," replied Clinton. "You 'd find it pretty tough work to hoe an acre of corn down there in the sun, when the thermometer is up to ninety in the shade. It's a good deal of trouble, too, to take care of so many fowls every day, in summer and winter. I like to do it, to be sure; but a great many boys would think they were real slaves if they had to do what I do."

"It does n't take all your time, does it?" inquired Whistler.

"O, no," replied Clinton. "I suppose it does n't take me more than two hours a day, on an average, to take care of my fowls and cornfield; but I do other work besides. I have had the whole care of the garden this summer. Come and look at it."

They proceeded to a large patch of ground in the rear of the house, which was devoted to a kitchen garden. It had been sown with peas, beans, radishes, lettuce, onions, early potatoes, sweet corn, cucumbers, and other vegetables. Some of the crops had already been gathered, such as the lettuce, radishes, and green

peas; and the others seemed to be in a flourishing condition.

"After we had planted the garden last spring," resumed Clinton, "father told me that if I would take the whole care of it, I might have one fourth of all the profits. I thought it was a pretty good offer, and so I took it up, and I've never been sorry for it yet. The garden has done very well, so far. We keep an account of everything that is raised; and next fall I can tell just how much my share will come to. I haven't had to work so hard as I expected I should, either. I do a little every day, and the weeds don't have a chance to get the upper hand of me. That is the way to manage a garden. If I should let my work get behindhand, I suppose I should very soon be discouraged."

"Mr. Preston told us that you did almost as much work as a man," said Whistler; "and I think he was about right. One thing is pretty certain: you can't have much time to play."

"O, no, I don't work so hard as a man," replied Clinton. "It only takes about one half of my time to

do all my work; but then I have some errands to do, and my lessons to study."

"I heard about your studying at home, and reciting to your mother: is that the way you do?" inquired Whistler.

"Yes," replied Clinton; "our school doesn't keep in the summer, and, as I have some spare time, I study a little at home. Last summer my rule was to study two hours a day; but this year I have had more work to do, and haven't studied quite so much."

"What do you study?" inquired his cousin.

"Arithmetic and grammar, principally, "replied Clinton; "but I write a composition once a fortnight and now and then get a spelling or a geography lesson."

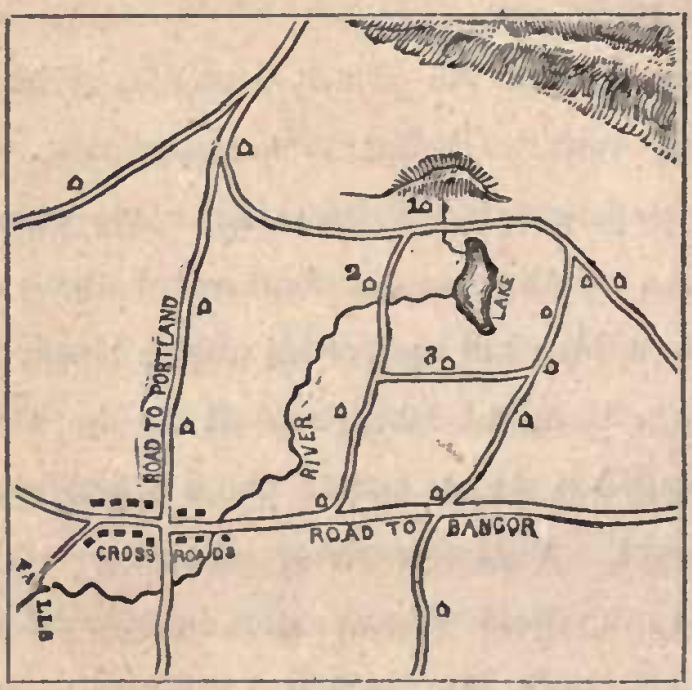
The boys now proceeded towards the duck-house. This was a small, rough shed; but it answered the purpose for which it was intended very well. It was situated near a small brook, and there was a little artificial pond connected with it, in which the ducks could swim when the water in the brook was low. Clinton himself made both the pond and the duck-house, the summer previous. There were about a dozen ducks in the pond, several of which were very

small, being but a few weeks old. They gracefully sailed off as the boys approached; but when Clinton spoke to them they recognized his voice, and wheeled about towards him

Having visited the principal objects of interest on the farm, Whistler began to manifest some curiosity about the geography of Brookdale. He got a pretty good idea of the natural features of the town, by ascending a high hill back of his uncle's house. Before him lay a beautiful lake, or pond, as the Brookdale people called it, which looked like a bright mirror set in emerald. A narrow river, glistening in the sunlight like a silver thread, stole along through the meadows towards the southwest. There were but a few widely scattered houses in sight, for Brookdale was only a small farming settlement. On the north and east the view was hemmed in by high hills, covered with trees; but in other directions the prospect was extensive. Clinton pointed out to his cousin a mountain which he said was twenty miles distant. It looked like a faint cloud on the horizon

But I can give you a better idea of the geography of Brookdale by the aid of a little map, which will

show you at a glance an outline of the objects which Whistler saw from the hill, and also some things which he could not see from that position. The house num-



bered 1 is Mr. Davenport's, and behind it is the hill from which Whistler obtained his view. No. 2 is Mr. Preston's house, and No. 3 is the schoolhouse. The map shows the position of the lake, the river, and the brook near Mr. Davenport's house. It also shows the Cross Roads village, and the principal roads passing through the town.

CHAPTER III.

A MORNING'S WORK.

CLINTON'S chamber, which Whistler was to share during his stay in Brookdale, was one of the most curious rooms in the house. It was in the second story, on the west side of the house, — the side represented as nearest to the spectator in the engraving on page 30. It had two windows, one on the west, and the other — a luthern, or dormer window, — looking towards the south. The room was of pretty good size, but was low studded, the pitch of the roof bringing the ceiling so far down, on the sides, that a boy twelve years old could not stand up straight under it. This made it seem like a garret to Whistler, who had always slept in a large, airy chamber; but the walls were plastered and papered, and the room was in all other respects comfortably finished. It had a neat

and cosy air, however, which, in spite of its low ceiling, won rapidly upon the city boy's regards. The tastes and habits of its occupant were reflected in nearly every article. The bed, chairs and table, were such as you might find in almost any boy's chamber; but the extras that you do *not* find in every body's room were quite numerous.

The first thing that attracted Whistler's notice was a neat little box upon the table, made of maple. On turning over the top, it was transformed into a portable writing-desk, and was found to be supplied with pens, ink and paper. This, Clinton informed him, was a birthday present from his father, who made it. A small book-rack, with three shelves, was fastened to the wall, and held Clinton's little library. The books were mostly of a juvenile order, and among them were several that Whistler had sent to him in former years. The rack itself was of Clinton's own workmanship, and was very neatly made. Upon the upper shelf, which held no books, there was another specimen of his handiwork, in the shape of a full-rigged schooner, with sails spread and flag flying. Brought up in an inland town, and never having seen the salt water but once or

twice, Clinton knew but little about vessels. And yet he had built quite a respectable schooner; although, to the more experienced eye of Whistler, the model was not of the most approved clipper style. The name, "Dolphin," was painted on the stern.

A number of engravings, of various degrees of merit, were attached by pins to the walls of Clinton's room. Pasted upon the wall, around the looking-glass, there was a whole constellation of small pictures, which evidently had once figured in newspapers and handbills. The windows were furnished with paper curtains, which, judging from the quantity of pulleys, fish-bone rings, cords, and other rigging attached, were evidently put up by Clinton with an eye rather to ingenuity than simplicity of arrangement.

Such was the room to which Clinton introduced his cousin, when the family retired at night. After glancing at the various objects I have described, Whistler noticed a slate and several school books upon the table, and inquired:

"When do you study your lessons, Clinton? Have you got to get one this evening?"

"No," he replied; "I'm going to have a vacation

now. Father thinks I had better suspend my studies while you are here, so that I may have as much time to spend with you as possible. I am going to arrange my work, too, so that it won't take so much of my time."

"You need n't do that," said Whistler; "I can help you some about your work, and I'd rather do it than not. I can drive the cows home, and help weed the beds, and hoe the corn, and do lots of other things."

"Well, you can help me some, if you want to," replied Clinton. And the boys continued to lay their plans, and talk over matters of mutual interest, for an hour after they had got into bed, when sleep began to steal over their senses, and their pleasant schemes melted imperceptibly into airy dreams.

Early the next morning, before the sun was up, a rap on the chamber door aroused the boys, and was instantly obeyed; for it was the signal to arise, from Clinton's mother. Having hastily dressed themselves, they proceeded to the barn-yard, where they found Mr. Davenport engaged in milking the cows. A vacant stool, an empty bucket, and a gentle-looking cow, were awaiting Clinton's movements · and without

any delay he seated himself by the side of "Daisy," and the milky stream began to flow. There were two other cows, "Princess" and "Nelly." As Whistler could be of no service, he stood looking on, discussing the merits of the several cows with his uncle and cousin. He found that each of the animals had its own private character. Nelly was a red and white cow, with a gentle, motherly look. She evinced much attachment for Daisy, who, indeed, was her daughter, and resembled her in appearance and disposition. Daisy, however, was the tamest of the three, and a trifle handsomer than her mother. She would follow any of the family, and eat a turnip or an ear of corn out of their hands. Princess was dark-colored, and gave the most milk; but, as is apt to be the case with those bearing royal names, she was selfish, stubborn and mischievous. One curious thing about her was, that she always wanted to be milked first; and if the preference was given to one of the other cows, she showed her indignation very plainly. If any little attention was manifested towards the others, such as carding or stroking them, she would seem very jealous, and try to interrupt their enjoyment.

As the conversation was proceeding, Daisy showed some signs of uneasiness, upon which Mr. Preston said, in a pleasant tone:

"Mind your milking, Clinty, and postpone your stories until you get through. You haven't learned yet to milk well and talk at the same time."

Milking is an operation that ought to be done rapidly and without interruption, to be thoroughly and properly performed. Conversation is very apt to distract the attention of the milker, and thus interfere with his work, as it did in the case of Clinton.

The milking was soon completed, and the boys, as they drove the cows to pasture, talked as fast as they pleased. When they returned, breakfast was upon the table, and the morning air had so sharpened their appetites that they were prepared to do full justice to the ample meal.

"Now," said Clinton, as they went out after breakfast, "work is the first thing in the order of the day. I must attend to the fowls, and then I have got to weed a piece of ground, and after that I shall be at your service."

"I'll help you do the weeding, and I'll see you do

the feeding," said Whistler, laughing at his impromptu rhyme.

"Your kindness is exceeding,—come, let us be proceeding," quickly replied Clinton, taking up the rhyme.

"Good!" exclaimed Whistler. "Between us both we might make quite a decent song."

"That's the song I like to hear," said Clinton, as a hen, flying down from the box in which she had just deposited an egg, set up a noisy "Cut-cut-cut-cut-ca-*dah*-cut!" with the accent very strongly upon the last syllable but one.

"I suppose that's what you call 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel,'" observed Whistler.

"Yes," replied Clinton; "and if it isn't good poetry, it is good poultry, which comes near enough to it."

A flock of turkeys, which were at large, spying Clinton with his familiar peck measure, now approached the boys, pompously marching like a file of soldiers,—a solemn-looking gobbler taking the lead. A few handfulls of corn scattered among them, gave them plenty of business, and Clinton then turned his atten-

tion to the hens, which at this season of the year were confined within their own quarters, in consequence of their scratching propensity. Having fed them, and given them a dish of fresh water, he was ready to commence work in the garden. Whistler wanted a hoe, too; and he was provided with one, and set himself to work by the side of his cousin.

"I should n't think there were many weeds here," said Whistler, after hoeing a few minutes. "I can't find hardly anything but grass."

"I should say that was enough," replied Clinton. "This witch-grass is about the worst stuff that ever got into a garden."

"Do you call this witch-grass?" inquired his cousin.

"Yes, that's one name for it," replied Clinton. "Some people call it piper-grass. Just feel of the roots, and see how tough they are."

"Why, they 're almost like wire!" said Whistler.

"I never saw anything like it to grow," continued Clinton. "I've cleaned out every spear of it from this ground three times this summer, and yet see how it has grown. It is almost impossible to kill it. The roots will grow right through a potato, or a chip, or

almost anything that happens to be in the way. I left a handful on the fence-rail last spring, and the first thing I knew it had taken root in the wood, and was growing finely. Father says that when he was a boy they used to say that the only way to kill it was to dry it, and then put it in your pipe and smoke it, and be very careful of the ashes."

"Does it bother you so every year?" inquired Whistler.

"No," replied his cousin; "this is the first time we have had any in this piece of ground, and nobody knows how it came here. I suppose a few seeds got scattered here somehow or other. Before the ground is planted again, it will have to be dug all over with a ten-tined fork. That will clear it out, if anything will."

"If father was here now," said Whistler, "how he would moralize over this witch-grass! I can imagine just how he would talk. He'd say, 'That's right, boys! — pull away! This witch-grass has all got to come out, at some rate or other. It's an abominable pest, isn't it? Well, it's just like a bad habit in a man's mind. — It's no trouble at all to get it started;

but if he ever wants to get rid of it, what a time he'll have of it! Why, he'll have to be raked fore and aft with the ten-tined fork of tribulation, and then he won't be sure that he has got all the plaguy roots out.' "

The half-serious, half-comic air with which this was said, and the amusing imitation which Whistler gave of his father's manner, proved too much for Clinton's gravity, and he indulged in a hearty laugh, in spite of the excellent moral so queerly brought to his mind. It was not Whistler's design, however, to make sport of his father. He had merely given as faithful an imitation as he could of what his father might have said, could he have looked in upon the boys just at that moment. Mr. Davenport, when in the company of his children, lost no opportunity of drawing lessons of instruction from the natural world, and from the daily events that happened around them; and this habit had so impressed itself upon Whistler's mind, that he often found himself instinctively imitating his example.

The boys, who were now some distance apart, worked on in silence a short time, when suddenly

Whistler gave a vigorous stroke with his hoe, and then said, as if talking to himself:

"There, old fellow,—you 're fixed now!"

"What is that?" inquired Clinton.

"A toad."

"Did you kill him?"

"Not exactly. I only cut off his jumpers. Just look here, and see how smooth I took off his hind legs."

Clinton took a look at the poor victim, which was struggling in its agony, and, shaking his head, said, seriously:

"That is too bad!"

"What is too bad?" inquired Whistler, with some surprise.

"Why, to torture a poor thing in that way. I'd put him out of his misery, if I were you."

Whistler felt the mild rebuke, and, having found a large stone, he gave the poor reptile his death-blow with far less satisfaction than he experienced when he cut him in halves with his hoe. He was not at heart a cruel boy, but he was thoughtless,—a fault which is the excuse (and a very poor one it is) for a great deal

of suffering inflicted upon dumb creatures. Having dispatched the toad, he resumed his hoe, saying, in a half-apologetic tone:

"I never could bear toads; — they say they are poisonous."

"I don't believe that," said Clinton; "I never heard of any body being poisoned by a toad. Besides, they are very useful in a garden, — did n't you know it?"

"Useful? no, indeed! I thought they ate up the things," replied his cousin.

"They eat up the grubs, and worms, and bugs, and such things," replied Clinton; "but they don't hurt the crops. They are good friends to the farmer, and I 'm always careful never to hurt them."

"I did n't know that; I thought they had no business here," said Whistler. "I 've always been in the habit of pelting them, just as I would a snake, wherever I found them; and that 's the way all the boys serve them where I live."

"You ask my father about them when we go home, and see if he does n't tell you they are useful," remarked Clinton, who thought his cousin was not entirely satisfied on this point.

"O, I suppose you are right; only it is something I never heard of before," replied Whistler.

"I've tamed toads, before now, so that they would eat out of my hand," resumed Clinton.

"You have?"

"Yes; it is easy enough to tame them. If they find you don't disturb them they'll come out from their hiding-places, and hop around you, and follow you, especially if you give them something to eat. Did you ever see them eat?"

"No; I never did."

"Well, you ought to; for it's a curious sight. When they get within reach of a slug or a fly, they dart their tongue out as quick as lightning, and seize it. The tongue is very long, and red; and it moves so quick that people sometimes think they are spitting fire, when they are only feeding."

"I've heard that toads spit fire," said Whistler.

"That's only one of the old prejudices against them," replied Clinton. "They don't spit fire any more than I do; but I can tell you of one strange habit that they *do* indulge in."

"What is that?"

"They swallow their own skins."

"How can they do that?" inquired Whistler, with a look of incredulity.

"They shed their skins, like snakes, at certain times; but, instead of leaving their old coat where they happen to take it off, they always swallow it."

"How do you know that?—did you ever see them do it?"

"No; but father has a book that says so. Besides, I never found a toad's skin, although there are plenty of toads about here."

"Perhaps they bury their cast-off skins," suggested Whistler, who, now that several of his illusions in regard to toads were dispelled, was disinclined to allow them the credit of doing anything remarkable.

"If I were going to guess," replied Clinton, "I should think that they might hide them in some way. But the book I spoke of was written by a great naturalist, and I suppose he knew what he was writing about. In fact, I don't know that they shed their skins at all, only from what I have heard and read about it."

"Well, poor toady, I 'm sorry that I killed you; but I did n't know any better," said Whistler, as he tossed

away the remains of his victim with his hoe, and resumed his work.

About two hours before the sun reached the meridian the boys finished weeding the piece of ground, and Clinton's work for the day was accomplished.

CHAPTER IV.

AN AFTERNOON EXCURSION.

THE boys, after completing their work, amused themselves in various ways until dinner time. They proposed going over to Mr. Preston's in the afternoon; and as soon as dinner was dispatched, they were on their way. The distance was about three quarters of a mile; but it was the nearest house to Mr. Davenport's. A walk of less than fifteen minutes brought them to a large, old-fashioned farm-house, shaded by a great elm-tree. Three girls were just coming from the house, each with a small basket or tin pail in her hand. Ella and Emily were among them, and the first-named introduced the youngest to Whistler as her cousin Harriet. Harriet was between ten and eleven years old. She and Emily were the only children of the

family now at home. The youngest of the flock—sweet little Mary—fell sick and died about six months previous to the time of which I am writing. A month or two before that sad event, the oldest of the children, Jerry, took it into his head that he could find a better place than home, and suddenly disappeared one Sunday, while the family were at church. For a long time nothing was heard from him; but at length he wrote to them, from a foreign port, stating that he had gone to sea, and was bound on a long voyage.

It appeared that the girls were about starting on a strawberry excursion when the boys arrived; and the latter having been invited to join them, they all set out together. Strawberries grow wild in that part of the country. Ella and Whistler, to whom this fruit was known only as a dear-bought luxury, thought it must be fine to eat the berries fresh from the vines, with no fear of coming to the bottom of the box, and no two-shillings-per-quart drawback upon the indulgence. They sauntered along in advance of the others, looking on every side for the red and luscious fruit; but they found none; for it was a long walk to the strawberry-patch. In going to it, they had to pass through a

swamp, near the upper end of the pond, the entrance to which did not look very inviting to Ella.

"O, dear! I never can go through that horrid place!" she exclaimed. "I should be frightened out of my wits!"

"O, no, you won't," said Clinton. "There's a good path all the way through, and nothing will hurt you. You follow right behind me, and I'll help you over the bad places.

Ella still stood in doubt, while Whistler in his eagerness was following the faint track, forgetful of his companions. Emily and Harriet assured their cousin that they had often crossed the swamp; and, with a little further encouragement from Clinton, she set forward,—not, however, without some misgivings. In some places the ground was very wet; and they had to step upon stones, logs, stumps, etc., which had been used for this purpose for years. Two or three brooks also crossed their track, over which old logs had been thrown to serve as bridges. In many places a thick growth of bushes, often armed with sharp thorns, stretched across the path, making it difficult for them to force their way through. Ella, however, was the only

one who evinced any fear; and, but for Clinton's constant encouragement and aid, she would have concluded that the strawberries were not worth the risk and trouble of getting them.

"Are there any snakes here?" she inquired, a new terror bursting on her mind.

"None of any consequence," replied Clinton. "There may be a few water-snakes: but they won't harm any body."

"It makes no difference what they are, if they are only snakes,—I'm as afraid of one kind as of another," said Ella, who had a city girl's dread of everything of the serpent kind.

"O, no; you wouldn't be afraid of a water-snake. They are just as harmless as toads," said Clinton.

"I'm afraid of toads, too,—and I can't help it," replied Ella.

"If you should live in the country a little while you wouldn't mind such things," said Emily.

"Yes, I should," replied her cousin. "I always had a perfect antipathy to snakes, and toads, and spiders, and all such creatures. I know they won't hurt me; but I can't help hating them."

Seeing how little headway they made against her prejudices, Clinton and Emily dropped the subject. They were not yet out of the swamp, however; and soon another terror arose in the mind of the timid city girl.

"I shall get poisoned here! — I know I shall!" she said, in a tone of mingled alarm and resignation, as though she would have added, "You may do what you please with me, — I'm resigned."

"There's no danger of that," replied Clinton, with a laugh. "You keep close to me, and I will look out for you."

"Are there any poisonous plants in this swamp?" inquired Whistler, who had heard Ella's remark.

"Yes, there's plenty of poison ivy," replied Clinton.

"O, yes; I see some now!" said Whistler, who was still at the head of the little party. "That's poison ivy, isn't it?" he continued, pointing to a luxuriant vine that was twining around the trunk of a dead tree.

"No, that isn't it; that's the other kind of ivy, or woodbine, or creeper, as we call it," replied Clinton.

"What is the difference?" inquired Whistler.

"A good deal of difference; — one is poisonous and the other is n't," said Clinton.

"I know that; but how do you tell one from the other?"

"You see the leaves grow in clusters?"

"Yes; there are five of them. Each leaf looks as if it were made up of five little ones."

"Well, the leaves of the poison ivy have only three in a cluster; and that is the way I tell the difference between them. When the leaves grow in threes, look out; but when they are in fives, there 's no danger."

"I must try to remember that," said Whistler, repeating to himself the last remark of Clinton. "Let me see, — how can I fix that in my mind, so that I shall know 'which is which,' as they say? Now, I have it! If the leaf has five fingers, like my *hand*, I can *handle* it; if it has n't, I must not touch it."

This process, in Whistler's mind, was not a mere boyish whim. It was founded on a law planted deep in our mental natures, — the law of the association of ideas. It is difficult to remember a number or figure standing by itself; and the matter becomes still worse

when two numbers are to be borne in mind, and distinguished from each other, as in this instance. But, by associating the number in the mind with some particular object, event or word, we have a clew to it, which will seldom fail us; and if the word, event or object, bears any resemblance to the number, it is all the better. Thus you see that Whistler was quite a philosopher in this matter, although he did not know it. By making the act of handling depend upon the fancied resemblance of the leaf to his hand, he would never be at a loss to tell whether it was the three or five-lobed leaf that he was to avoid.

"There 's a three-leaved one! — that 's a poison ivy, is n't it?" exclaimed Whistler, a few moments after, pointing to a vine that looked very much like the other, except in the number of its leaflets.

"Yes, that 's one of them, — don't touch it!" said Clinton, as Whistler approached it.

"I shan't look at it," said Ella. turning her head in an opposite direction.

"It won't hurt you if you don't touch it, — you need n't be afraid to look at it," remarked Clinton.

"I 've a great mind to touch it, just to see how it

would operate," said Whistler, going still nearer to the vine.

"Why, William Davenport!—you silly boy!" exclaimed Ella, with a look of astonishment.

"No! don't touch it, Willie! You'll be sorry if you do," said Clinton. "It will make your face and eyes swell up, so that you won't know yourself; and it won't feel very comfortable, either."

"But it doesn't poison every body, does it?" inquired Whistler.

"No; some people can handle it without being hurt," said Clinton; "but I wouldn't risk it, if I were you. If you get poisoned once, you'll be more liable to it next time; and so the danger will keep increasing, every time you come in contact with it."

"Is there any dogwood about here?" inquired Whistler, turning away from the ivy.

"Yes; there's a little, I believe," said Clinton.

"That is awful stuff! I've heard that you can't look at it without getting poisoned," said Ella.

"I don't believe that story," replied Clinton. "I've looked at it myself without being poisoned. Sometimes people who have been poisoned a good many

times, get to be so susceptible that they can't go near ivy or dogwood without being infected, even if they don't touch it; and I suppose that accounts for the notion that dogwood will poison you if you only look at it."

"What sort of a thing is dogwood? What does it look like?" inquired Whistler.

"It is a very pretty shrub," replied his cousin. "It grows almost large enough to be called a tree, and has smooth and glossy branches and leaves. It thrives only in wet places, I believe; but it is not near so common as the poison ivy."

There are one or two other facts relating to these plants, which Clinton did not know, but which may be of some advantage to my readers when they ramble through the woods and swamps. These two shrubs, known in common language as "poison ivy" and "poison dogwood," both belong to the sumach family, and are the only plants in our New England woods that are poisonous to the touch. Neither of them bears a conspicuous blossom or fruit; so that if the young botanist should chance to discover a strange plant with a beautiful and prominent flower, he may

be sure that it will not harm him to pluck it. An unknown plant should never be eaten, however; as many species of the vegetable kingdom, which may be handled with impunity, are poisonous if taken into the stomach.

Our party had now emerged from the swamp, and were ascending to higher land. They soon came to the strawberry patch, but did not find the berries quite so plenty as they anticipated, other pickers having been there before them. Clinton proposed going further, and Whistler fell in with the suggestion; but the girls preferred to stop and glean the few berries that were left, rather than to seek new fields. The boys, however, concluded to extend their tramp to the hills, about a mile distant, leaving the girls to look out for themselves. Their course lay through a succession of fields and pastures, gradually ascending, until they reached the base of the high hills shown in the upper part of the map of Brookdale. These hills were thickly wooded, many of the trees being of majestic size and great beauty. They were chiefly pines, and the ground beneath was cushioned with the brown foliage of former years, while the air was full of the

balmy odor that distills from this noble tree. Now and then a decayed stump, which their united arms could scarcely encircle, showed where some giant of the woods had fallen; but, in the main, this hill-side forest was as nature made it.

The boys found it a slippery and toilsome path up the hill; but, once on the top of "Bald Peak," as the eminence was called, they were rewarded for their pains by the extensive prospect that met their eyes. The spot was very rocky, and, as its name implied, was destitute of trees. The view took in a wide range of country, dotted with houses and cultivated fields.

"There!" exclaimed Clinton, as they seated themselves upon a mossy stone, — "have you got anything in Boston that beats this?"

"I don't know, — we have some pretty good views in Boston," replied his cousin.

"From the top of the State House?" inquired Clinton.

"Yes, that's one of the places," said Whistler; "but we have a pretty distant prospect from our house, — fully equal to this, I should say."

"How far can you see?" continued Clinton.

"Well, I can't say exactly," replied Whistler, with the utmost soberness; "but I believe we can see about ninety-five million miles, in the day time, and considerably further in a clear evening."

"I'll knock under, — I don't think even Bald Peak can beat that," replied Clinton, with a laugh.

After resting themselves, the boys, suddenly remembering that they had started in quest of strawberries, concluded to go down to the foot of the hill on the side opposite to the one they ascended, where Clinton thought they should find some berries. They had not proceeded far, when the sharp crack of a musket was heard not far off.

"Halloo! somebody's gunning about here! I wonder who it can be?" said Clinton.

"Are there many houses over this way?" inquired Whistler.

"No; there is n't one nearer than our house," replied Clinton. "There is n't a road within two or three miles either, except a logging-road through the woods."

"Then it must be somebody from Brookdale," observed Whistler.

"I suppose so," added his cousin.

They soon reached a clearing in the woods, and discovered a rough-looking man concealed behind the prostrate trunk of a large tree, getting ready to fire at

a pair of rabbits, which were nibbling the herbage at a short distance from him. The timid creatures apparently heard the boys' footsteps, for they suddenly fled, before the man noticed that any one else was near.

When he turned about and saw the boys, he looked surprised, and a scowl settled upon his face.

"What did you scare my game for?" he inquired, in a surly tone, addressing Clinton.

The latter seemed somewhat alarmed, and replied that it was entirely accidental. The appearance of the man was far from prepossessing, leaving out of the account his cross looks, and the solitary place in which they encountered him. His face was coarse and unshaven, and his hair looked as if it was not on good terms with the comb. He wore a loose blouse, or frock, and a queer slouched cap, and his feet were without stockings. After giving the boys a searching look, he said, addressing Clinton:

"Do you know me?"

"Yes, sir," he replied.

"Who is this boy?" continued the man, pointing to Whistler.

"He is a cousin of mine, from Boston," replied Clinton.

"What are you here after?" inquired the gunner.

"Partly to take a walk, and partly to get some strawberries," said Clinton.

The man now got up, and the boys noticed — what had before escaped their attention — that he was quite lame. Using his gun to help support his body, he hobbled a little ways, and then turned back toward the boys, and said, in a kinder tone than before:

"Clinton, I want you to do me a little favor, if you will."

"I will, with pleasure," replied Clinton.

"I met with an accident this morning," continued the gunner. "I'm taking a tramp after game, you see. I started last week, and am on my way to Moosehead Lake, all alone. I camp out nights, and have got a booth over yonder, where I slept last night. But this morning, as bad luck would have it, I fell from a tree and sprained my ankle, and it's just as much as ever I can do, now, to hobble about. I'm afraid I shall be laid up here two or three days, if I don't do something for it. If I could only get a little rum, or balm of Gilead, or pain-killer, or something of that sort, to bathe it with, I should be right down glad."

"I guess mother has got something that would be good for your ankle," said Clinton, anticipating the

man's request. "I'll ask her, and if she has, I'll bring it over to-morrow forenoon."

"Could n't you get it yourself, without saying anything to her about it?" inquired the sportsman.

"No, I don't think I could,—I don't know anything about her medicines," replied Clinton. "But if she has got anything that is good for a sprain, she would send you some, I 'm certain of that."

"But I don't want her nor any body else to know that I 'm here," said the man.

Clinton did not know what to say to this. After a brief pause, in which the sportsman seemed in deep thought, he continued:

"The case is just this: I 'm owing old Ben Brown a little money, and I can't pay it now; but Ben is such an ugly old dog, that if he should hear that I 'm around here, it would be just like him to have a writ out after me, or do some other rascally thing. You must n't tell a single soul that you saw me here. If you do, it might get to him. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir; I 'll keep dark," replied Clinton.

"You promise, on your word of honor, that you won't say a word about me?" continued the man.

"Yes, sir," replied Clinton.

"Well, I believe your character is pretty good, and I suppose I can trust you," said the man; "but if you *should* betray me, all I have got to say is, look out for Dick Sneider!"

The savage tone with which this last sentence was uttered, startled the boys somewhat; but they made no reply. The man then bound Whistler to secrecy by a similar promise. The boys, who had seated themselves on the log, now arose to depart, Clinton observing as he did so:

"I'm sorry that I can't bring you something for your sprain, Mr. Sneider; but I don't see how I can, unless you will let me ask mother."

"Never mind that. I'll give my ankle a good bathing in cold water to-night, and I guess I shall be able to travel in a day or two."

The sun was getting low, and the boys now started for home, at a brisk pace. Their adventure supplied a topic of conversation most of the way; but, in reply to Whistler's numerous questions, Clinton could give no very definite information in regard to the man they had so unexpectedly encountered. All that he knew

about Sneider was, that he once kept a disreputable shop at the Cross Road, where he sold intoxicating liquor, in violation of law; that his establishment was finally broken up, and himself sent to jail; and that he had the name of being a desperate fellow.

On their way the boys passed through the pasture in which the cows were kept. They found Daisy, Nelly and Princess, quietly awaiting their coming at the gateway; and, having taken down the bars, they drove, or rather followed, the sober and dignified animals to their home.

CHAPTER V.

THE ACCIDENT.

"YOU will have to amuse yourself indoors to-day," said Clinton to his cousin, the next morning, as he looked out of the window, soon after the accustomed triple rap had aroused him from his slumbers. The rain was falling fast, and the direction of the wind betokened a storm rather than a shower. Whistler was somewhat disappointed, as he and Clinton had planned a ride; but he concluded to make the best of it, and find such amusement as he could in the barn, the shop, and the house.

After breakfast the boys went out to the barn, Clinton having several jobs to attend to. Whistler, not liking to be idle, took it into his head to cut up some hay for the horse,—a kind of work which he could do as well as Clinton. The hay-cutter, as most of you know.

consists of a sort of shallow wooden trough, with a cylinder, in which are several sharp knives, at one end of it. The cylinder is made to revolve very fast, by means of an iron wheel and crank turned by the hand; and as the hay is pushed slowly against the knives, it is cut into short pieces, and falls into the vessel placed to receive it. Whistler had worked at the machine but a few minutes, when some drops of fresh blood on the hay attracted his attention. He looked at his left hand, which was feeding the machine, and found, to his astonishment, that the end of the fore finger was missing! For an instant, he could hardly believe his eyes, for the knife had done its work so neatly that he felt no pain nor unusual sensation in the mutilated finger; but the flowing blood quickly dispelled all doubt as to what had happened.

"Clinton!" he called, "come here, quick! I've cut my finger off!"

Clinton, pale with fright, ran to his aid; but he seemed somewhat relieved when he found that his cousin had not lost the whole finger, but only about half an inch of it. It was bad enough, however, as it was; and he sympathized most tenderly with Whistler They were

about to go into the house, when a new idea occurred to Clinton.

"Where is the piece that came off? Have you found it?" he inquired.

"No," replied Whistler.

"We must find it, then, and put it on before it gets cold. I should n't wonder if it would grow on again. I believe I 've heard of such things," said Clinton.

"You look for it, then,—I can't. I don't want to see it," said Whistler, who began to feel faint and sick from the sight of blood. "O, dear!" he added, "what shall I do? My visit is spoilt!—and I thought I should have such a good time!" And the tears began to flow fast.

"Don't say so, Willie," said Clinton, who was looking among the hay for the end of the finger. "This won't be a very bad affair. I know you 'll have a good time yet, before your vacation is over."

"What will uncle say?" continued Whistler. "He cautioned me about the hay-cutter this morning; and father did, too, before I came down here. I thought I was careful, and I don't see, now, how I did it."

"Here 's the piece!" said Clinton, as he discovered

the missing tip. "It looks as natural as life, does n't it? Now, let me put it on, just as it belongs, and then we 'll go in and get mother to do the finger up."

Clinton carefully pressed the severed parts together, and put a handkerchief over the hand, and they then went into the house. Willie's appearance, as he entered the room, gave his aunt quite a shock; but she quickly recalled her presence of mind, and, on learning the nature of his injury, took immediate measures for his relief. Clinton, in the meantime, called his father. As his uncle entered, Whistler gave vent to a new outburst of tears; but when Mr. Davenport, instead of alluding to the warning he had given him, or charging him with carelessness, spoke of the danger attending the use of the hay-cutter, and of the frequency of accidents of this kind, Willie's tears gradually dried up, and he began to regain something of the self-command he had lost. It often happens that the first shock of a misfortune unmans even the bravest of spirits; and we need not wonder, therefore, that Whistler was at first so much affected by what was after all not a very serious accident.

It was thought best to send for the physician at

once; and Clinton was despatched for him, in a covered wagon, as the rain was still falling fast. Dr. Hart lived a mile or two from Mr. Davenport's; and it was nearly an hour before he drove up in his gig. He found his young patient quite calm and cheerful, and received from him a minute account of the accident. He then tenderly unbound the wounded finger, and examined into the extent of the injury.

"This is not going to be a very bad affair, Willie," said the doctor, after he had completed his examination. "It is n't near so serious as it would be if you had cut off two or three of your fingers, as I have frequently known boys to do when playing with a hay-cutter. I think the tip will grow on again, and the finger will be about as good as it ever was. It is very fortunate that you did not forget to put the piece on again."

"I must give Clinton the credit of that; I should 'nt have thought of it," said Whistler.

"Suppose the piece should n't grow on, what then?" inquired Clinton.

"Then his finger will always be half an inch short, and it will be rather tender for a time," replied the

doctor. "But I feel quite confident that it will knit together. I shall have to sew it on, to keep it in its place; but that won't hurt him much."

The doctor drew from his coat pocket a small case of instruments, at the sight of which little Annie retreated from the room. Clinton soon followed her example, feeling that he had not the nerve to witness the operation. Whistler himself looked rather anxious, but not more so than his uncle and aunt. He promptly obeyed all the directions of the doctor, however; and when the needle was inserted through his flesh, he did not flinch, nor utter a single cry, although the pain sent the tears into his eyes. No resistance being offered, and no time lost in coaxing the patient, the operations of sewing and dressing were performed very quickly and neatly.

"There," said Dr. Hart, as he applied the last bandage, "you bore that like a hero. There are few men who would behave so well as you did under such an operation. Now, if you take good care of your finger, I have no doubt it will heal up nicely. You must make a baby of it for a while, and treat it very tenderly; if you don't, it will be likely to let you know it."

The doctor then gave Mrs. Davenport some directions in regard to the management of the wounded finger. Having thus fulfilled his professional duty, he branched off to the topics of village news, as was his wont, remarking to Mr. Davenport:

"Friend Walker met with a pretty serious loss last night."

"What loss? I've heard nothing about it," replied Mr. Davenport.

"Heard nothing about the fire!" exclaimed the doctor, with surprise. "Why, his barn was burned flat last night, with everything in it."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. Davenport.

"Yes," continued the doctor; "and his oxen, and one of his cows, and all of his hogs, were burned to death. Then his barn was full of hay — about twenty tons. It's quite a sad loss to the old man, and he's almost crazy about it."

"O, I am sorry for the old gentleman," said Mrs. Davenport, with much feeling. "It's a great loss, at his time of life, and he has seen so much trouble, too."

"But where were we, that we knew nothing about this before?" inquired Mr. Davenport.

"O, I don't wonder at that at all," replied his wife. "You know his house is over a mile from us, and there's quite a hill between us, so that a fire in his neighborhood would n't show very plain here."

"How was it with his horse? I suppose he was in the pasture," said Mr. Davenport.

"Yes,— they turned him into the pasture last night; but they can't find anything of him this morning," replied the doctor.

"That is very singular; it looks as if some roguery had been going on," observed Mr. Davenport.

"O, yes; the barn was set on fire,— there is no doubt of that," continued the doctor. "There had n't been any fire or light near it for several months."

"Who do they suppose did it?" inquired Clinton, who had returned to the room while the doctor was telling the news.

"They don't suspect anybody, that I know of," replied the doctor. "Mr. Walker says he has n't the slightest idea who did it, and other folks are as much in the dark as he is. People can't help thinking of that drunken, vagrant son of his; but, then, I don't believe Tom would do such a fiendish act, bad as he is."

"O, no; Tom Walker never could have done such a thing as that," said Mrs. Davenport.

"Well, I'm sorry it has happened," said the doctor, as he arose to depart, "not only on Mr. Walker's account, but because it diminishes the security of the whole community. There is no safety for any of us, when such villains are prowling around. Good-by, Willie; I'll call to see how you are getting along, in a day or two. Good-day, all."

Soon after the doctor departed, Clinton and his father rode over to Mr. Walker's to see the ruins, and to tender their sympathies to the sufferers. It was indeed a sad, and, in that village, an unusual spectacle, that they beheld. The smouldering heaps of half-burned grain and hay, the blackened remains of the animals that perished, the partially consumed carts, ploughs and implements, the iron of which only remained, and the surrounding trees, stripped of every green leaf, presented a gloomy picture of desolation, where peace and plenty smiled but a few hours before. The family had not recovered from their alarm and excitement, and seemed to feel their loss very deeply. Mr. Davenport tendered his sympathies and

his services to his afflicted neighbors, and soon after returned home.

Whistler, during the absence of his uncle and cousin, talked quite cheerfully with Annie, and seemed in his usual spirits.

"I've got a baby, now, that beats yours," he said, as Annie brought out her doll to play with it.

"Where is it?" inquired Annie.

"Here it is," he said, pointing to his bandaged finger.

"O, I would n't have such a baby as that!" exclaimed Annie.

"He's a real good baby; he's alive, and yours is n't, said Whistler.

"But his head is cut off," suggested Annie.

"No matter; the doctor has sewed it on again," replied Whistler.

"Well, it's an ugly baby; I don't like it," said Annie.

"No, he is n't ugly; he never cries, nor makes any fuss," replied Whistler.

"He makes *you* cry, though," retorted Annie, with a look so arch that Whistler laughed merrily.

"I guess your finger does n't pain you much, Willie, does it?" inquired Mrs. Davenport.

"No, ma'am," he replied, "I don't feel it hardly any, now; and it has n't hurt me much yet, only when the doctor was fixing it."

For the greater security of Whistler's finger, which could not bear the slightest touch, his aunt fixed a sling, in which he carried his arm. During the day he experienced but very little pain from the wound, and in this respect was most disagreeably disappointed. Mr. Davenport suggested that his father ought to be informed of the accident; and Whistler decided to write to him that afternoon, as he had the free use of his right hand. The thought of doing this, however, brought a shadow over his countenance.

"I wish I could get along without letting the folks at home know anything about this," he at length said.

"That would hardly be possible," said his uncle, "as your finger will not have time to heal up entirely before you go home; and, even if it were possible, do you think it would be right to do so?"

"No, sir, — I did not think of doing so; but I dread to have them know it," replied Whistler. "Mother

will worry about me, and father will say that I was careless, — that 's what he always says when anything happens to me."

"Is n't it possible that you were a trifle careless?" inquired Mr. Davenport.

"I suppose I was," he replied.

"Clinton has used that hay-cutter, more or less, for four or five years, and he never hurt himself with it," said Mr. Davenport, who really thought that Willie was a little heedless, and wished this accident should prove a valuable lesson to him.

The gathering tears in the boy's eyes warned Mr. Davenport that he had said enough, if not too much. Clinton, noticing his cousin's sensitiveness, came to his relief, saying:

"Well, father, I always thought that hay-cutter was a dangerous thing, and I've come pretty near cutting my fingers with it more than once. But I've thought of a way that I can fix it, so that it won't cut off any more fingers. I'm going to nail a strip of wood over the place where you put the hay in, close up to the cylinder, so that you can't reach the knives with your fingers. I'll go and do it now, and see how it works."

Whistler proceeded with his letter. Clinton came in, after a short absence, and reported that he had applied his safety-guard to the hay-cutter, and that it worked admirably. He said it interfered but very little with the operation of the machine, and he thought it would not trouble him at all after he became accustomed to it. It was impossible, he said, for a person to cut his fingers when this guard was on, unless he did it with design.

When Whistler had finished his letter, Clinton took it over to the Cross Roads, this being the nearest post-office. The rain had ceased, and Mrs. Davenport, having an errand to do, accompanied Clinton, leaving the house in charge of Whistler and Annie, who found plenty of ways of amusing each other until the return of the absentees.

It was not until bed time that Whistler began to experience much inconvenience from his cut finger. He then found that he should need Clinton's assistance in undressing; and he subsequently discovered that it was not quite so easy to keep his finger from contact with surrounding things in bed, as it was when sitting up.

As the boys talked over the incidents of the day, after they had got into bed, Clinton inquired, in a low tone:

"Didn't you think of Dick Sneider, Willie, when you heard of the fire?"

"Yes, I thought of him the very first thing, and I should have spoken of it if we hadn't promised not to," replied Whistler.

"So should I," added Clinton; "but, then, it isn't likely he set the fire, for he was so lame he couldn't have got over to Mr. Walker's."

"No, I don't imagine he did it," said Whistler; "but there was something about his looks that I didn't like. How cross he looked when he first saw us!"

"I know it; and how afraid he was that we should tell somebody we saw him!" added Clinton.

"Well, if he wasn't so lame I should have some suspicion of him," said Whistler.

"But, perhaps he wasn't so very lame; he might have only made believe so," suggested Clinton.

"I wish we hadn't bound ourselves not to say anything about him," said Whistler.

"They say a bad promise is better broken than kept," added Clinton.

"Yes; but how do you know that was a bad promise?" inquired Whistler.

"I don't think it was a very good one, even if the excuse he gave about his owing Mr. Brown some money was the real one," replied Clinton.

"Well, I hope they will catch the rascal that set the fire, whoever he is," said Whistler; "but, after all, I don't think it could have been the man we met in the woods."

Whistler did not pass the night very comfortably. When he slept he was visited by troubled dreams, the effect of the nervous excitement of the day; and his wounded finger was continually receiving knocks, the throbbing pain of which awoke him, sometimes keeping him in agony for half an hour afterwards. Daybreak was never more welcome to him than it was the next morning.

CHAPTER VI.

A LITERARY ENTERPRISE.

WHISTLER soon found that his visit to Brookdale was not quite "spoilt," as he feared it was, by the accident that had happened to him. His injured finger was somewhat troublesome, it is true, especially at night, when it received many unfortunate knocks, which often awoke him from a sound sleep. It also prevented his joining in the rough and active sports of which boys are generally so fond; and, as he had but one hand to work with, he found, moreover, that he could render but little assistance to Clinton, in his regular duties. But there was another and a pleasanter side to the account. The wound pained him but slightly, and his health was not at all affected by it. He could walk and ride as much as he pleased; and then, when Clinton could not accompany him in

his excursions, he never failed to find sources of amusement about the house, or in the shop or the barn. The doctor called occasionally to look after the finger, and always reported that it was doing well, never omitting to praise Whistler for the good care he took of it.

One stormy day, about a week after the accident, as Whistler was sitting in the house, deeply engaged with a book, the lively "Clack! clack!" of the flail struck up, and, taking his cap and book, he ran out to the barn. He found Clinton in the back part of the barn,

engaged in threshing rye. The grain, tied up in bundles, was piled on each side of him as high as the flooring above. The process of threshing hardly need be described; and yet, as possibly some young city reader may never have witnessed it, I will say that a quantity of straw is laid upon the barn floor, and the heads of it are beat by the flail until all the grain is shaken out of it. The flail is made of hard

wood, in two pieces, united by leather, or some other flexible material, which allows the shorter piece to play freely, something like the lash of a whip. When the grain is all threshed out, the straw is removed, and tied up in bundles. The grain is then shovelled up, and passed through a coarse sieve, and is ready to be stored away.

"Have you found a piece, Willie?" inquired Clinton, as his cousin entered the barn.

"No, I can't find one that suits me," replied Whistler.

"Well, I've thought of another plan, and a better one still," continued Clinton; "and that is, that you *write* a dialogue for us."

"*I* write a dialogue! That's a pretty joke! — ha! ha! ha!" replied Whistler, with a merry laugh.

"Yes, — why not?" inquired Clinton. "You write compositions, and you have got plenty of time now, while your finger is sore. Come, you'll try, won't you?"

"O, no; I couldn't do anything if I should try," replied Whistler. "If I had only known it before I left home, I could have got a copy of the dialogue the

boys spoke at our last exhibition. It was a real funny piece; better than any in this book. One of these will do, though, if we can't find something better."

"But we must have something better," said Clinton, with earnestness, laying down his flail. "If you won't write one yourself, you'll help me do it, won't you?"

"Yes, I'll agree to do what I can; but I'm afraid I shan't help you much," replied Whistler.

"If we put our heads together, I think we can get up something that will answer," said Clinton. "As soon as I've threshed this lot I'll go into the house with you, and see if we can't make a beginning."

The church and Sabbath-school which Clinton attended were making preparation for a social festive gathering, to be held in a grove; and among the entertainments proposed were to be declamations by several of the young people. Clinton and Whistler had both been invited to take part in these exercises, and they had also been requested to select a dialogue for two or three smaller boys, and to see that they were properly drilled in their parts. They felt that quite a serious responsibility had been laid upon them; and for a day or two it had been the subject of much

consultation. Clinton had at length made a selection for himself, and Whistler had concluded to repeat the piece which he spoke at his school exhibition a few weeks before. The dialogue, however, was yet to be determined on; and, as they had less than two weeks for preparation, it naturally gave them some uneasiness, especially as they had thus far been unable to find a suitable piece.

After Clinton had finished threshing the lot of grain which he had begun, he went up to his bedroom, with Whistler, and opening the little desk upon the table, they sat down, and tried to agree upon some plan, or subject, for the dialogue. They did not accomplish much, however, beyond making a few pen flourishes, and thoroughly overhauling the contents of the desk, which contained, among other things, a few of Clinton's compositions, in which Whistler was much interested. The fact was, neither of them had any idea to propose, and the longer they sat there the farther their attention wandered from the subject in hand, until, at last, the call to dinner interrupted their fruitless consultation.

The boys had no better success in the afternoon with their literary enterprise, and Clinton's ardor began to

cool off a little; for, to tell the truth, the ardor was pretty much all on his side. They retired to bed early in the evening, intending to have "a good talk" before it was time to go to sleep. While thus engaged, telling stories to each other, Whistler related an incident that once occurred in the school he attended.

"There!" exclaimed Clinton, as soon as he had finished, "why can't we bring that into our dialogue? It would be a complete subject, would n't it? We might change it a little, if we wanted to, to make it tell better in a dialogue, but it would n't be very bad if we took it just as it is. What do you say to that idea, Willie?"

"I don't know; perhaps we might make something out of it," replied Whistler. "If we could only get it up equal to the original, it would make some fun, I can tell you."

"We 'll try, at any rate," said Clinton.

And they did try, the next day, — yes, and several days following. The result was, by their joint efforts, Whistler's story was "done" into dialogue, with some slight changes to give it more effect. The old and very reasonable adage, that "Two heads are better than

one," proved true in this case, as they made a better dialogue, together, than either could have written alone. They seemed aware of this, and even Whistler came to feel quite a lively interest in the literary bantling. As the reader may like to know something of this production, I will give the substance of it, or, rather, the story on which it was founded.

A group of boys were playing in a school-room, a little while before school time, when a trifling dispute arose between two of them — John and Benjamin. One gave the other the lie, and, both being of hot temperament, it was "a word and a blow." They clinched, fell, and rolled together on the floor, and were pummeling each other well, when suddenly the teacher walked into the room. Taking the pugilists by the collar, he lifted them upon their feet, and sent the other boys to their seats. On inquiring into the origin of the quarrel, he found that they were about equally guilty. Accordingly, he reproved them both sharply for their fault.

"If you must fight," he said, "why don't you do it in a decent and gentlemanly way, and not act like a couple of bullies? I'll show you how it should be

done. Here, John, take this stick (handing him the familiar ratan), and now give Benjamin one dozen smart cuts with it across his back. And don't you lift a finger, Benjamin, unless you want me to take you in hand."

John seemed as much astonished as pleased, as he took the rod and began to pay on the blows; while his antagonist received them without a word or cry, but with a sullen and dogged look. After he had completed the dozen, the teacher told Benjamin to take the ratan, and bestow the same favor upon John's back. Both faces changed at this unexpected turn in affairs, and Benjamin laid on his dozen with a heartiness that showed he fully entered into the spirit of this part of the arrangement.

This operation finished, the teacher asked each of them if he was satisfied, and received an affirmative answer.

"Well, then," said the teacher, "if you are both satisfied, your quarrel is made up, and you may complete the reconciliation by shaking hands, and giving each other the kiss of peace."

There was a general titter among the scholars at

these words, which the teacher promptly suppressed. Seeing that the two culprits hesitated, he repeated the order; but they did not move.

"Well," he continued, "I see your feelings are hardly mollified, yet,—I shall have to see what I can do;" and he took the rod, and advanced towards them.

The boys, blushing to their temples, barely extended their hands, and brought their faces together, followed by an explosion of laughter from the whole school, which the teacher sternly silenced.

"That won't do," said the teacher; "it was too cold and mechanical,—there was no soul in it. You can do better than that; now, try again."

After a little more coaxing (the ratan still impending over their heads), the culprits concluded to comply, and went through the ceremony in a much more cordial manner. There was a new burst of laughter from all hands, in which the teacher himself joined, this time; and the two offenders retreated to their seats, with faces as red as peonies, not knowing whether to laugh or cry.

Such was the story upon which the dialogue was founded. In dramatizing it, however, Clinton and

Whistler had found it necessary to make some slight changes.

The boys made three copies of the dialogue — one for each of the principal characters. It was decided that Clinton should take the part of schoolmaster, and the two belligerents were to be represented by two smaller boys. These boys had agreed to meet Clinton and Whistler on Saturday afternoon, to study and rehearse their parts. The place of rendezvous was a charming little dell, in a grove behind the schoolhouse, which was well known to all the children in town by the name of "Spouting Hollow," from the circumstance that it was occasionally used by the young orators as a place of rehearsal.

The boys had not yet shown their dialogue to any one. Clinton had thought of getting his father to read it, but no opportunity had presented itself as yet. On Friday evening, after tea, Mr. Davenport took a chair from the house, and seated himself just outside of the front door to enjoy the cool air, for the day had been quite sultry. Annie, with her little chair, soon seated herself by his side and engaged his attention, and it was some little time before Clinton could get

a chance to broach the subject which was upon his mind.

"Ah! have you finished the dialogue, so soon?" inquired Mr. Davenport, when Clinton alluded to it.

"Yes, sir, it's all done, and we're going down to Spouting Hollow, to-morrow afternoon, to rehearse it," replied Clinton.

"Well, you have been pretty smart, and I hope you have done your best, too," said his father, in a tone that seemed to imply some slight misgivings.

"*We* think we have done pretty well," remarked Whistler. "At any rate, we've made a better dialogue than I thought we could."

"Ah! I'm glad to hear that," replied Mr. Davenport; "what is the subject of it?"

"Perhaps you would like to read it," said Clinton, with some reluctance, slowly drawing the manuscript from his jacket pocket.

"Yes, I will read it, if you wish," replied his father.

Mr. Davenport took the paper, and commenced reading it, for it was not yet dark. The boys walked back and forth, around the house, both feeling something of that indefinite dread which the modest literary

aspirant always experiences when his performances are submitted to superior wisdom and judgment.

"How long it takes him to read it!" at length whispered Clinton, after they had returned several times to the doorway, and found him still absorbed with the dialogue.

After a few minutes' absence they again returned, and Mr. Davenport had commenced reading it anew.

"He's reading it over again,—you may know he does n't like it," whispered Clinton, when they were beyond his hearing; and the hearts of both sank within them.

The next time they approached the doorway, Mr. Davenport had finished reading the paper, but seemed to be so absorbed in thought that he did not notice the boys. They turned to go away again, when he suddenly called to them, and they went back, feeling like a couple of culprits.

"I was thinking," he said, "of deferring my judgment of this dialogue for an hour or so, until I could collect my thoughts a little better; but, as I see you are in considerable suspense, I won't ask you to wait any longer. And, to begin, I think you have executed

your task very well indeed, in a literary point of view. The dialogue is natural and sprightly, and the whole arrangement is very good, and does you much credit. And yet, I can't say I am wholly pleased with the piece. Like many other authors, I think you have been unfortunate in the choice of a subject. Whose idea was it, — who suggested the plot?"

"It was my idea," replied Clinton; "Willie told me the story, and I thought it would make a good subject for a dialogue."

"Ah! it is founded on fact, is it?" inquired Mr. Davenport.

"Yes, sir; it is almost word for word what happened in our school, once," replied Whistler.

"Well, I will tell you plainly what my objections are," continued Mr. Davenport. "They are of a purely moral nature, and perhaps you will not feel their force so much as I do. In the first place, I don't like the fighting scene. I think it is so brutal and wicked for boys to maul each other in that way, that I would not encourage it, even by imitating it in sport. Besides, children are great imitators, and it would n't be strange if some little fellows, after seeing your

dialogue represented, should try to play off a fight on their own hook; and perhaps they might get in earnest before they were through with it. And then, again, seeing a sham fight, like yours, might strengthen a taste which too many boys have for witnessing *real* battles, in which bloody noses and torn clothing are the prizes. I presume you did n't think of these things; but don't you see there is some force in them?"

"Yes, sir," replied Clinton.

"But they represent such things at the theatres," suggested Whistler.

"I know they do, Willie," said his uncle; "but, in my opinion, the theatre is a very poor school of morality."

"And we read about such things in books, too," added Clinton, gathering courage from his cousin's objection to his father's position.

"A written description of a fight, or any other species of wrong-doing, is a very different thing from the same affair acted out by living performers," replied Mr. Davenport. "Still, such scenes ought to be introduced very sparingly and very cautiously into books, in my opinion."

"Is there anything else in the dialogue that you don't approve?" inquired Clinton.

"Yes," replied his father; "but I suppose I must blame Willie's teacher for the other faults, rather than you. I don't think he took a very wise or proper course to settle the dispute between the two boys. I should say that the mutual flogging must have deepened their hatred of each other, and encouraged their fighting propensities. Then I do not like the forced reconciliation; it could only make deceivers and hypocrites of them. Exposing them to the ridicule of the whole school was another bad thing about the affair. In fact, I should think that the whole scene must have had a bad effect, not only on the culprits, but upon all who witnessed it; and for that reason I should not like to see it represented in a dialogue."

"Well, then," said Clinton, in a desponding tone, "we shall have to give up the dialogue, for we have n't time to write another, even if we knew we could write a better one."

"I hope you are not going to allow one failure to discourage you," replied his father. "I do not find any fault with this, except with the subject; and I do

not see why you cannot write another as good as this, that shall be free from all objectionable matter."

Here the conversation ceased, and Mr. Davenport went into the house. His decision in regard to the dialogue had not been announced without the greatest pain, as he well knew how sore a disappointment and how deep a mortification it would carry with it. There was no honest and proper course, however, but to express his opinion freely and fully; and he accordingly did so, in as kind a way as he could.

"I almost wish we had n't shown it to father," said Clinton, when they were alone. "I don't believe any body else would think there was any harm in it."

"Well, as for my part," said Whistler, "I 'm glad we *did* show it to him; for if there 's anything out of the way in it, I should much rather know it now, than not find it out until after it was spoken."

This manly remark had a decided effect on Clinton, who, in the bitterness of his disappointment, had uttered a sentiment which, to do him justice, we must say did not come from his heart.

"I suppose it 's all for the best," he said; "but what

shall we tell the boys, when they meet, to-morrow, to learn their parts?"

"We can tell them that our dialogue did not suit us, and we're going to write another," replied Whistler.

"Another?—how can we do that?" inquired Clinton.

"Why, you don't mean to give it up, do you?" inquired Whistler. "I don't, at any rate. We've promised the boys an original dialogue, and I, for one, shan't back out without trying at least once more. We've got over a week to do it in, and it didn't take us three days to write that."

"Yes,—but the subject?" suggested Clinton.

"Ah, that's the stick!" said Whistler. "Don't you think your father could tell us of something to write about?"

"You might ask him," said Clinton, who seemed determined that if another dialogue was written, his cousin should shoulder the burden.

Willie did ask his uncle, who was much pleased to learn that the boys had concluded to try again. He talked with them during the evening in regard to the

matter, and suggested several plans and subjects, one of which struck them very favorably, and they at once concluded to adopt it.

Early the next morning the boys went to work upon their new dialogue; and so earnestly did they labor, that, to their own astonishment, it was finished when the dinner hour arrived. It was much shorter, however, than the first one, and was also simpler in its construction. Mr. Davenport read and approved it; and in the afternoon the nymphs of Spouting Hollow —if that classic retreat was honored by such inhabitants—had the pleasure of listening to its first rehearsal.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INCENDIARY.

"THERE! I can't do anything with only one hand!" exclaimed Whistler, somewhat impatiently, as he was at work in the shop one morning with Clinton. He was nailing two pieces of wood together, for some purpose or other; but the nail split them both, and rendered them useless.

"You did n't drive the nail in right, that 's the trouble," said Clinton, after glancing at the pieces. "If you had turned it round the other way it would n't have split. You have set the wide part of the nail across the grain of the wood, and it acts just like a wedge. Don't you see how the nail widens towards the head? Well, that wide part ought to go the same way as the grain, and not across it."

"I 've heard something of that before, but I did n't

think anything about it," said Whistler, who, it should be remarked, had far less mechanical skill than Clinton, who had enjoyed unusual facilities for cultivating this talent, and, besides, had a natural aptitude for it.

"Even if you were driving a nail into solid timber, where there was no danger of splitting," continued Clinton, "the wide part ought not to go against the grain; for, if it does, there will be a little opening around the head of the nail, and that will let in air and moisture, and make the wood decay."

"Well, I'll try it again," said Whistler; and he began to look around for some more pieces of wood.

"There is another thing about driving nails," continued Clinton; "did you know that you can drive one into hard wood a great deal easier if you wet it?"

"No, I never heard of that," replied his cousin.

"It is so," added Clinton. "Oil is the best thing to wet it with; but water is good, or you can put it into your mouth, as the carpenters often do."

"There's some knack even in driving a nail, is n't there?" said Whistler.

"Ah, there comes Mr. Walker," said Clinton, as a

man appeared in the yard, and he went out to speak to him.

"Where's your father, Clinton?" inquired the man.

"I don't know,—he is somewhere about here," replied Clinton. "Shall I go and find him?"

"No matter about it,—I'm in a hurry," replied Mr. Walker. "I was going by, and I thought I'd stop and let your folks know that father has heard from his horse, and got track of the rascal that set fire to the barn."

"Has he?—who is it?" inquired Clinton.

"We've traced the fellow to Bangor, and there we've lost him," continued Mr. Walker; "but I'm in hopes we shall get some clew to him again. He sold the horse about twenty miles this side of Bangor."

"But who is the fellow?" inquired Clinton, with a feeling of suspense somewhat similar to what he experienced when his father had the rejected dialogue under consideration.

"We don't know for a certainty,—he went by two or three different names, and probably all of them were assumed for the occasion," replied Mr. Walker; "but, from the description of him, we think it

must be a fellow that father complained of for selling rum, over at the Cross Roads. His name was Dick Sneider."

"There! that explains it all, then!" said Clinton, and the color suddenly went from his face.

"Explains what? Do you know anything about it?" inquired Mr. Walker, with surprise.

Clinton then told Mr. Walker of his interview with Sneider in the woods the night before the fire. Willie also came out, on hearing the subject of conversation, and supplied some omissions which Clinton, in his alarm and nervousness, had overlooked. Mr. Walker was a quick-tempered and impulsive young man, somewhat overbearing in his manner, and, when in a passion, not a very agreeable person, by any means. He could scarcely restrain his anger, as the boys related their adventure, and repeatedly interrupted them with the inquiry, in a quick, snappish tone:

"Why didn't you tell of this before? What does all this mean, I should like to know?"

His passion rose as the boys proceeded, and he soon lost all self-control, and broke forth in a most profane and outrageous manner, applying all kinds of abusive

epithets to Clinton in particular, for not telling of his interview with Sneider before; pronouncing him a fool and simpleton for being so easily deceived by him; and, with the usual inconsistency of men in a passion, threatening to have him arrested as an accomplice or partner in the crime. The boys hung their heads like criminals, under the stinging reproof; but, fortunately for them, Mrs. Davenport, who, unobserved, had heard the whole conversation, thought it her duty to interfere, now that Mr. Walker's temper had reached such a pitch, and she accordingly stepped from the house. The young man softened his words and tones a little when he saw her, but still condemned Clinton's error in severe terms. She admitted that he had acted unwisely, but mildly rebuked Mr. Walker for the severity of his reprimand, reminding him that Clinton was but a boy, and had probably done what he thought was right. She also spoke of the accident which Whistler met with, and of the busy preparations they had been making for the picnic, which had caused them almost to forget the fire.

Mr. Walker now started for home; but he had not proceeded far when he met Mr. Davenport, and he

stopped to inform him of the discovery he had just made.

"Is that man drunk, or crazy, or what is the matter with him?" inquired Whistler, indignantly, as soon as Mr. Walker was out of hearing.

"No, Willie; he's a fiery-tempered man,—that's all that ails him," replied his aunt.

"Well, if I had n't thought he was crazy, or drunk, or something of that kind, I would n't have stood so much of his impudence," added Whistler, whose courage rose as the choleric young man rode off.

"I know one thing," said Clinton, "if Bill Walker ever talks to me in that way again, I'll give him as good as he sends."

"O, no; you don't mean that," replied his mother. "That would be putting yourself on a level with him; and I'm sure you would n't wish to do that. His bad temper is a great injury to him. It is notorious all over town, and nobody respects him so much as they otherwise would, on account of it. He makes a great many enemies, too, and, I have no doubt, he feels heartily ashamed of himself when he gets over his fits of passion. I hope you will never try to meet such a

man with his own weapons. The best way is to keep silence, or speak mildly. 'He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city,' as the Bible says. If you had been impudent to Mr. Walker, it would have made him more furious, and he would not get over his resentment half so easily; but now, he will soon get calmed down, and then he will see that he has treated you badly, and the next time you meet him he will be as kind to you as ever, — you see if he is n't."

"Yes, — but before he gets cooled off, he 'll go all over town and tell what a fool I am," said Clinton, bursting into tears.

"O, no, I think not," replied his mother; "but, even if he should, every body knows what he is, and his reports will not injure you any, in the end."

Mr. Davenport soon came in, to make inquiries concerning the affair of which he had just heard. He could hardly credit Mr. Walker's story, who, to tell the truth, had not troubled himself much to explain the mitigating circumstances in the case. He listened patiently to the boys' statement, and was very glad to find that the affair was not so bad as had been represented.

"I am very sorry this has happened," said Mr. Davenport, after they had made their explanations. "If you had told me of this as soon as we heard of the fire, it is probable that Dick might have been arrested; for the officers would have known who they were in pursuit of. Your silence has probably defeated the ends of justice this time."

"But he seemed to be so lame, that we thought he could n't be the fellow," suggested Whistler.

"Ah, he was too shrewd for you there," said Mr. Davenport. "You should n't believe all that such a fellow tells you."

"Well, to tell the truth, uncle," said Whistler, "I don't think Clinton is so much to blame as I am. I remember, now, his saying that he was suspicious of Dick, and that a bad promise is better broken than kept; but I rather talked him out of it."

Whistler had a nice sense of honor, hence this magnanimous confession, which, indeed, was not a mere compliment, but was the truth. Clinton would probably have made the revelation immediately after the fire, had he not been influenced otherwise — slightly it is true — by his cousin. This, however, did not wholly

excuse his mistake. He knew more of Dick's bad character than Whistler did; and, besides, he ought not to have been so easily influenced against his own convictions. This, indeed, had always been one of Clinton's chief failings,—a disposition to yield too readily to the wishes and arguments of others, when his own better judgment ought to have dictated a different course.

Clinton did not allow his cousin to assume all the blame in the matter, but insisted on bearing his full share. He strongly protested, however, that he thought he was doing right.

"I am a little inclined to doubt that," replied his father. "It seems to me you could not have given the subject much thought. I suppose you had a sort of general impression that you were doing nothing wrong; but I suspect that you did not turn the matter over in your mind as you ought. But, even if you did, after due consideration, conclude that you had done right, that would not make the action right."

"But, in that case, I should n't be to blame for doing as I did, should I?" inquired Clinton.

"Yes, you would be to blame, unless you could give

a good excuse for not knowing better," replied his father. "But, are you sure that you gave the subject proper reflection, and acted according to the best of your knowledge?"

"Yes, sir; I thought I did," replied Clinton.

"Your promise to Dick was the only reason for your silence, was it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you make such a promise? Supposing his story was true about the debt, was it right for you to shield him from justice?"

"But he said he could n't pay."

"Then you regarded him as an honest but unfortunate debtor, and thought it would be an act of mercy to stand between him and his cruel creditor, did you?"

Clinton could not answer that question, but looked perplexed. He finally evaded it by saying:

"But he looked so ugly, that I did n't dare to refuse him."

"Did he threaten you, or use any compulsion?" inquired his father.

"Yes, sir; he threatened us after we had promised not to say anything about it."

"Well, that will hardly excuse you for making such a promise. I think you yielded too willingly. You can hardly say that he *compelled* you to promise secrecy. But, suppose he did compel you, what then?"

"I suppose it would not have been binding on us."

"Why not?"

"Because he forced us into it."

"Then, when the barons of England compelled King John to sign the Magna Charta, which secured to Englishmen their liberties, the act was not binding upon him, because he was forced into it; was it so?"

Clinton made no reply.

"If I should catch a boy stealing apples from my trees," continued his father, "and should refuse to let him go until he had promised not to steal any more, he would be under no obligations to keep his promise, would he?"

"Yes, sir, he would."

"Are there any circumstances, then, under which it is proper to violate a promise?"

"Yes, sir, — when the promise is wrong."

"Yes, that is a settled principle in morals, and one

that commends itself to every honest mind. If I promise to do what is wrong, I am bound to break that promise. Now, apply this principle to your promise to Dick. Do you think that was a promise that ought to have been kept?"

"I know it was n't, now, but I did n't know then."

"But I want you to banish from your mind all thoughts of the fire, and what you have since learned about it. We will suppose that Dick's story was true. You meet him unexpectedly in the woods. You know that he is a worthless fellow, a vagabond and a rascal. He pleads that he is in debt, and unable to pay, and wants you to promise to tell no one that you saw him. You know that if he is too poor to pay what he owes, it is because he is too lazy to work. You know, moreover, that he is a man who would be just as likely to tell you a lie as the truth. Now, was it right for you to make such a promise to such a man?"

"No, sir."

"And, after it was made, was it right to keep it, and shield such a worthless fellow from the consequences of the life he is leading?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, why did n't you find that out sooner?"

"I did n't look at it in that light."

"That confirms what I said at the beginning. You did not give the matter much thought; if you had, you would have seen it in just this light, even if the fire had never happened. But, what surprises me most of all is, that, after you knew some villain had set Mr. Walker's barn on fire, and run off with his horse, you did not take the trouble to think over this affair earnestly, and decide what it was your duty to do. You seem to have let it slip from your mind, as soon as you could, without knowing whether you were doing right or wrong. If you had done this under somewhat different circumstances, it might have blasted your character for life. Many an innocent man has found himself entangled in the meshes of the law, by merely keeping a rogue's secret."

Clinton was much affected by his father's plain dealing with him, and attempted no further excuse. Whistler also felt badly about the affair, and he could not help taking to himself a good share of the censure bestowed upon his cousin. Mrs. Davenport, however, who had been a silent listener to the conversation, was not wholly satisfied with the course her husband had

taken. She thought he had judged the boys with too much severity, and she accordingly put in a plea in their behalf. Her argument included pretty much all that could be said in mitigation of their error; and if they had been on trial, and she had been their lawyer, we may suppose that the heads of her "brief" would have been something after this fashion:

(1.) Their youth and inexperience — not strange that a wicked and artful man should mislead them — the young, by a beautiful law of our natures, are more inclined to believe than to doubt what is told them; not strange that so young persons should not go through a long process of reasoning, as to the right and wrong of the matter.

(2.) Dick's feigned lameness was well calculated to deceive them, and allay all suspicion.

(3.) Their motive in keeping the secret was honorable — a regard for their promises.

(4.) The hints thrown out by several people, that Mr. Walker's intemperate son, Tom, was suspected, may have had some influence on their minds.

(5.) The excitement about Willie's accident, the dialogues, etc., had probably caused them to think less about the matter than they otherwise would..

"Well," said Mr. Davenport, after she had concluded her defence, "you have made out something of a case; but, if my judgment was too severe, I am inclined to think yours is too lenient. After all, perhaps the truth lies about half way between us; so, Clinton, you can consider my judgment as softened down a little; but," he added, with a smile, "you must n't think you are altogether so blameless as your mother makes you out."

"Mr. Walker will get his horse back again, won't he?" inquired Willie.

"Yes; a man has a right to his own property, wherever he can find it," replied Mr. Davenport.

"I hope they will catch Dick, too," said Clinton, "and then they won't have anything to blame me for. I should be willing to go to court, as a witness against him, if they could only nab him."

"I hope he will get his deserts," said his father; "but, whether he does or does not, you must let this unfortunate affair be a lesson to you in the future; and beware how you listen to bad men, or make rash promises, or keep a secret which you have reason to think ought to be revealed."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FOREST PICNIC.

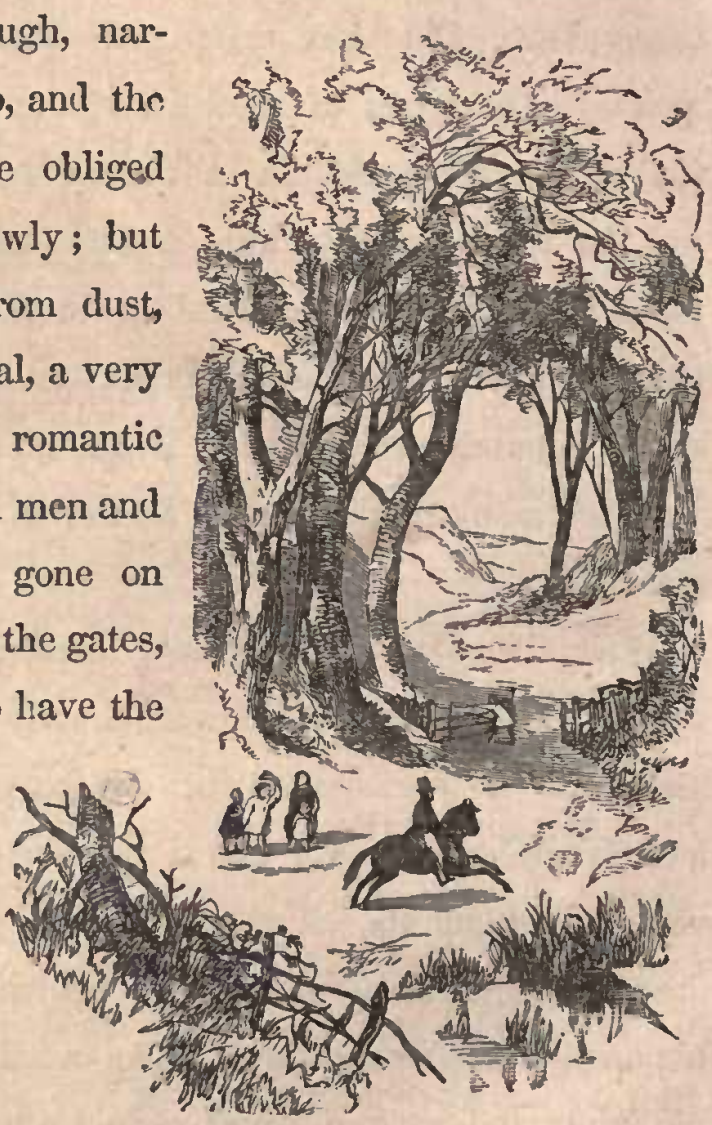
THE long looked for twenty-fourth of August, the day appointed for the picnic, at length arrived. At Mr. Davenport's the whole family were stirring before daylight had fairly appeared; for there was much to be done, and it was necessary to start for the scene of festivities at an early hour. A heavy mist hung over the village, at sunrise, but it soon melted away, and the weather was all that could have been desired.

Fanny, who was to carry the family to the pienic, was furnished with an extra allowance of oats; the pigs and poultry also received rations sufficient to last them till night; and the oxen and cows were turned into the pasture, to shift for themselves. After breakfast, the family dressed themselves in their best suits; the horse was harnessed into a large, open wagon;

sundry cakes, and pies, and loaves of bread, were stowed away in the bottom of the cart; and then, locking up the house, all hands seated themselves in the vehicle, and they drove off towards the Cross Roads. The place of rendezvous for the party was the vestry of the church at the Cross Roads. This was the only church within a dozen miles of Brookdale, the few scattered families in that village not being able to sustain public worship among themselves. So the church at the Cross Roads was *their* church, although many of them lived four or five miles distant from it.

When Mr. Davenport's family arrived at the vestry, they found that the people were nearly all assembled, and were about to start for the grove, which was a mile distant. There was a singular collection of vehicles around the church, — chaises, carryalls, wagons, hay-carts, &c., — some of which were neatly trimmed with green boughs. The word was given to get ready, the various teams were loaded up, and the motley procession started, escorted by several young men on horseback, and the rear brought up by a large company on foot. Their route, most of the way, lay

through a noble forest; for the road was not a public highway, but was little more than a path, being used chiefly for the teaming of wood. In many places it was quite rough, narrow and steep, and the carriages were obliged to proceed slowly; but it was free from dust, and was, withal, a very pleasant and romantic road. Several men and children had gone on ahead to open the gates, or, perhaps, to have the satisfaction of being first on the ground. The principal manager of the arrangements, who was mounted on a handsome horse, also rode in advance of the procession, to see that the way was cleared.



The grove selected for the picnic was at a place called "The Falls," about a mile from the village, in a southwesterly direction. At this point the river becomes a miniature cataract, the current being narrowed, and the descent quite abrupt. The bed of the stream is rocky, and the waters, as they dance and tumble along their course, seem full of the spirit of frolic. There are fine groves on each bank, extending almost into the water.

The party reached the picnic ground in good order. The horses were removed from the wagons and carriages, and hitched in shady places, on the skirts of the woods. The young people were informed that they would have two hours to ramble about and amuse themselves, while their parents were looking after the provisions, arranging the tables, and gossiping with their acquaintances. Clinton, Whistler and Annie, soon fell in with Ella and her two cousins, and the six concluded to take a walk together in the woods.

"What a charming place this is for a picnic!" exclaimed Ella; "we haven't anything that will compare with it around Boston,—have we, Willie?"

"No, I never saw such groves as these around

Boston, although we have some pretty good places for picnics," replied Whistler.

"Your brother Oscar used to like to come over here," said Clinton, addressing Ella; "he has rambled all over these woods many a time."

"And so has Jerry; they used to come over here together, gunning," added Emily.

"Do you know that we expect Oscar home again pretty soon?" inquired Ella, addressing Clinton in a low tone.

"Yes, Willie told me," he replied.

"He is going to live with our Aunt Page, in Vermont; we think it will be a real good place for him," added Ella.

"I 'm glad of it, and I hope he will do well," said Clinton.

"He says he means to," replied Ella; "he wrote mother a beautiful letter, just before I left home. I wish you could read it; it does n't seem like him, at all."

"I wish I could see him once more. Perhaps I shall, when I go to Boston next month," said Clinton.

The boy of whom they were speaking was Ella's

oldest brother. He was at this time about fifteen years old. He had been a wayward boy, and had caused the family much trouble and sorrow. He had been disobedient and disrespectful to his parents, and rough and domineering towards the other children. He chose for his associates boys who were, to say the least, no better than himself, and fell into indolent habits, neglecting his studies at school, and shirking, as far as he could, the various little services which he was expected to perform at home. At length his misconduct became so troublesome, that it was thought best to remove him from his city associates and temptations. Accordingly, he went to reside with his uncle in Brookdale, where he spent several months. This, however, did not reform him; but, instead of correcting his evil habits, he exerted a bad influence on his new acquaintances. This was especially true of his cousin Jerry, who was sadly contaminated by his example; and even Clinton, with all his good habits and principles, did not wholly escape the moral contagion. But at length his career in that place was brought to a close by an act that entitled him to a cell in the county prison, and his father was obliged to take him home,

to save him from the consequences of his crime. He then made a short voyage to sea; but, not fancying that mode of life, he again became a loiterer about the streets of Boston, fell into bad company, was arrested for stealing, and, after a public trial, was sent to the Reform School; and there he remained at the time this conversation took place.*

The two hours allotted to the young folks for sports and rambles were improved in various ways. Some strolled through the woods and fields, in quest of flowers or berries; some sailed chip boats on the river, or waded in its clear waters, or tried to catch imaginary fish with worms impaled upon pin hooks; some amused themselves with a swing which had been suspended from the limb of a lofty oak; others played "I spy!" "hide and seek," "tag," and similar games; and others, reclining on the grass under the trees, talked and sang, and watched the movements of those around them. Clinton and Whistler, who felt some responsibility for a portion of the entertainment that was to be provided, did not remain long with the Prestons, but

* A fuller account of Oscar's career is given in the first two volumes of this series, namely, "Oscar" and "Clinton."

hunted up the boys who were to take part in the declamations, and assisted in making the necessary preparations for this part of the exercises.

At length the clear notes of a horn rang through the woods for several minutes. This was the signal for the company to assemble, and it was promptly obeyed. The "Log Cabin," as it was called, was the place of gathering. This was a long, low, and rude structure, the walls being of logs, laid one upon another, and the roof thatched with bark. There were several square holes in the sides, which let in the light, and an opening at one end, which served as a door. A pole was fastened to the gable over the door, from which floated an American flag. This log house was erected for the accommodation of picnic parties, by the young men of the neighborhood, several years previous.

The inside of the log house was as rude as the exterior. The end opposite the entrance had a raised platform, but the rest of the building had no floor except the native turf. On each side there was a rough bench, the length of the cabin, which furnished the only seats for the company. The interior was prettily decorated with hemlock and spruce boughs,

which were arranged in the form of an alcove and canopy, on the platform, producing a very pleasing effect.

When the people had all assembled in this forest hall, the pastor commenced the exercises by supplicating the divine blessing upon their festivities. He also addressed the company in a familiar manner, and then called upon the children for a song, which was given in a spirited style. After one or two speeches, and another song, the declamatory exercises were introduced by Clinton, who gave an extract from one of Webster's orations, in a creditable manner. Several misses and boys then recited poems, or declaimed pieces, Whistler being one of the number. Last of all came the following original dialogue, the joint production of Clinton and Whistler, which we feel bound to copy in full:

THE RIVAL SPEAKERS.

SCENE — *The platform of a school-room.* — CHARACTERS — THOMAS TROTTER, *a large boy, with a "big voice," and* SAMUEL SLY, *a small boy, whose vocal organ is pitched on a high key.*

[Thomas enters, and makes his bow to the audience, followed by Samuel, who goes through the same ceremony, a little in his rear.]

TOM [*turning partially round.*] — What do you want here?

SAM. — I want to speak my piece, to be sure.

TOM. — Well, you will please to wait until *I* get through; it 's my turn now.

SAM. — No, 't ain't your turn, either, my learned friend; excuse me for contradicting, but if I don't stick out for my rights, nobody else will. My turn came before that fellow's who said "his voice was still for war;" but I could n't think how my speech began, then, and he got the start of me.

TOM. — Very well; if you were not ready when your turn came, that 's your fault, and not mine. Go to your seat, and don't bother me any more.

SAM. — Well, that 's cool, I declare, — as cool as a load of ice in February. Can't you ask some other favor, Mr. Trotter?

TOM. — Yes; hold your tongue.

SAM. — Can't do that; I 'm bound to get off my speech, first. You see it 's running over, like a bottle of beer, and I can't keep it in. So here goes:

"My name is Norval; on the Grampian Hills
My father feeds — "

TOM [*interrupting him, commences his piece in a loud tone.*] — "Friends, Romans, countrymen!"

SAM. — Greeks, Irishmen and fellow-sojers!

TOM. — "Lend me your ears."

SAM. — Don't you do it; he 's got ears enough of his own.

TOM. — "I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him."

SAM [*mimicing his gestures.*] — I come to speak my piece, and I'll do it, Cæsar or no Cæsar. "My name is Norval —"

TOM [*advancing towards him in a threatening attitude.*] — Sam Sly, if you don't stop your fooling I'll put you off the stage.

SAM [*retreating.*] — Don't, don't you touch me, Tom; you'll joggle my piece all out of me again.

TOM. — Well, then, keep still until I get through. [*Turns to the audience.*]

"Friends, Romans, countrymen! lend me your ears;
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him."

SAM. — I say, Tommy, what are you bla-a-a-a-r-ting about; have you lost your calf?

TOM. — "The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Cæsar."

[*He is again brought to a stand by Sam, who is standing behind him, mimicing his gestures in a ludicrous manner.*]

Now, Sam, I tell you to stop your monkey shines; if you don't, I'll make you!

SAM. — You stop spouting about Cæsar, then, and let me have my say. You need n't think you can cheat me out of my rights because you wear higher heeled shoes than I do.

TOM. — I can tell you one thing, sir, — nothing but your size saves you from a good flogging.

SAM. — Well, that *is* a queer coincidence, for I can tell you that nothing but *your* size saves *you* from a good dose of Solomon's grand panacea. [*To the audience.*] I don't know what can be done with such a long-legged fellow, — he 's too big to be whipped, and he is n't big enough to behave himself. Now, all keep still, and let me begin again: "My name is Norval —"

TOM. — "I come to bury Cæsar —"

SAM. — I thought you 'd buried him once, good deeds, bones and all; how many more times are you going to do it?

TOM. — Sam, I 'm a peaceable fellow; but, if you go much further, I won't be responsible for the consequences.

SAM. — I 'm for *piece*, too; but it 's *my* piece, and not your long rigmarole about Cæsar, that I go in for. As I said before, "My name is —"

TOM. — "The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious;
If it were so, it were a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answered it."

SAM [*in a loud whisper.*] — I say, Tom, did you know you had got a hole in your unwhisperables?

TOM. — "Here, under leave of Brutus, and the rest,
(For Brutus is an honorable man, —
So are they all, all honorable men,)
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral."

SAM. — This is n't Cæsar's funeral, — it 's the exhibition of the Spankertown Academy, and it 's my

turn to officiate, so get out with Cæsar, — "My name is Nor — "

TOM. — "He was my friend, faithful and just to me;
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honorable man."

SAM. — Brutus be hanged; who cares for what he said? Come, you 've sputtered enough; now give me a chance to say something. "My name is — "

TOM. — Come, Sammy, *don't* interrupt me again, that 's a clever fellow. Let me finish my piece, and then you shall have the whole platform to yourself.

SAM. — You 're very kind, Mr. Trotter, — altogether too kind! Your generosity reminds me of an Irish gentleman, who could n't live peaceably with his wife, and so they agreed to divide the house between them. "Biddy," says he, "ye 'll jist be after taking the outside of the house, and I 'll kape the inside."

TOM [*to the audience.*] — Ladies and gentlemen, you see it is useless for me to attempt to proceed, and I trust you will excuse me from performing my part. [*Bows, and withdraws.*]

SAM. — Yes, I hope you will excuse him, ladies and gentlemen. The fact is, he means well enough; but, between you and me, he does n't know a wheelwright from a right wheel. I 'm sorry to say, his education has been sadly neglected, as you all perceive. He has n't enjoyed the advantages that I have for learning good manners. And, then, did you ever hear such a ridiculous spouter! He might make a very decent

town crier, or auctioneer, or something of that sort,—but, to think of Tommy Trotter pretending to be an orator, and delivering a funeral oration over Cæsar! O my! it's enough to make a cat laugh! And, now, ladies and gentlemen, as the interruption has ceased, I will proceed with my part:

"My name is Norval; on the Grampian Hills
My father feeds his flocks ——"

And—and—and—[*aside, to a boy near him*]—what is it?—[*to the audience*]—"feeds his flocks"—and—and—and—there! I'll be blowed if I have n't got dead stuck, a'ready! Just as I expected, that lubber that came to bury Cæsar has bullied all the ideas out of my head! [*Beats an 'inglorious retreat, with his hands over his face.*]

How the hearts of the young authors beat, as, concealed from the audience, behind the spruce boughs on the stage, they watched the progress of the piece, and trembled lest, after all their pains, it should prove a failure! But their anxiety was needless. The lads who took the parts acquitted themselves admirably, and the whole assembly seemed to join heartily in the applause which followed its conclusion.

After a few more addresses from gentlemen present, the assembly was dismissed for one hour. The older

people scattered themselves over the grounds, in little groups, while the children, pleased with the successful issue of their part in the entertainment, made the woods ring with their merry voices, as they bounded through the grove. Clinton and Whistler received many congratulations for the success of their dialogue and the excellence of their speaking. Among those whose commendation was most hearty, was young Mr. Walker, whom they had not seen, till now, since the memorable morning when his passion so completely overmastered him. The sight of him stirred up the sense of injury which was still rankling in Clinton's heart, and he tried to avoid him. Mr. Walker, however, was now as calm as a summer's day, and seemed to have entirely forgotten the character of that interview. Familiarly slapping the boy on the back, he said:

"Clinty, they say you composed that dialogue; is that a fact?"

"Willie and I wrote it, together," replied Clinton.

"Well, it was a capital hit; every body says so. Your speaking was good, too; you've covered yourselves with glory, both of you," said Mr. Walker.

The boys, somewhat abashed by praise from such a source, looked confused, and made no reply.

"By the way," continued Mr. Walker, putting a hand on the shoulder of each of the boys, and drawing them aside from other groups that were near, "you must n't think anything of what I said the other day. I was a little excited, you know, and I suppose I said rather more than I ought to. I have been sorry for it ever since, and I don't want you to think I meant it all."

"We can see, now, that we did wrong," said Whistler, perceiving that his cousin was at a loss what to say; "but, the fact is, we did n't think much about it at the time. We did n't mean any harm; that 's all the excuse we can give."

"No, we did n't mean any harm, and we both felt bad enough when we found how Dick cheated us," added Clinton.

"Well, we won't say anything more about that," remarked Mr. Walker; "it can't be helped, now, and I rather think we shall catch Dick, after all. If we do, he will have to sweat, that 's certain. He won't

get off with less than three or four years in the state's prison."

Mr. Walker passed along to other groups, but his few words to the boys had changed their feelings towards him very materially. Their resentment had melted away before his apology, and they felt relieved from a heavy burden of censure. Still, it must not be supposed that *all* traces of that outburst of passion were thus easily removed. No apology can sink so deep into the heart as an angry word or an unjust reproach. The scar remains after the wound is healed.

Another blast from the horn rang through the woods and summoned the people to the feast, which had been spread upon a long table under the trees, near the cabin. There was a bountiful supply of provisions, which had been contributed by the various families; and the company, standing around the tables, demolished the substantials and delicacies in a way that evinced the sharpness of their appetites and the excellence of the repast.

The dinner was followed by several speeches, stories, anecdotes and songs, and then the people dispersed, to

amuse themselves in their own way. Clinton proposed a blueberry party; and his parents, Whistler, Annie, the Preston children, and several others, entered into the arrangement. A short walk through the woods, by a path well known to Clinton, brought them to several acres of cleared land, which was literally covered with blueberries, of a large size, and in full perfection. To the regret of all, they had no vessels to fill; but they picked as many as they could eat, and each broke off a few branches from the well-laden bushes, to carry back to the grove, as specimens of the generous yield of the blueberry pasture.

No hour was set for the breaking up of the picnic; but, as the sun dropped down towards the west, one load after another started for home, those who lived most distant being generally the first to leave. Mr. Davenport and his family withdrew at an early hour, as they not only had a long ride before them, but had many things to attend to after they got home. The tongues of the young folks ran glibly enough as they jogged along through the solitary roads, and all the scenes and enjoyments of the day passed in vivid review before them. The sixth and last mile of their

homeward journey was half completed before they showed any signs of having "talked themselves out;" and then the conversation suddenly came to a stand, and they rode in silence for several minutes. Clinton, who had talked more than any of the others, seemed all at once absorbed in his own thoughts. He was thinking of the dialogue, and was about to ask his father something about it, when it occurred to him that he had already said full enough on that subject, and would perhaps be laughed at if he alluded to it again. After a few moments' silence, however, he got the better of his modesty, and again broached the all but threadbare topic.

"Father," he said, "there is one thing I don't exactly understand. You did n't like our first dialogue because the characters behaved so bad. Now, I don't see why you did n't object to this other piece, for the same reason. Tom and Sam did n't come to blows, to be sure, but they quarrelled bad enough."

"I wonder that you did not think of that, sooner," said Mr. Davenport.

"I did; I told Willie, before you read it, that you would object to it on that account; but, as you did n't

find any fault with it, I thought I would n't," replied Clinton.

"Until you were sure you should not have to write another dialogue?" suggested his father, with a smile.

"O, we could n't have done that, any way," said Clinton.

"Well," continued his father, "I think I can clear myself of all suspicions of inconsistency. And, in the first place, you must remember that I did not say it was best to exclude *all* exhibitions of bad temper or character from a book or a dialogue. There are some faults that may be very properly exhibited in this way. But there are certain gross forms of evil which it is not wise to portray too minutely. For instance, it would be painful to see the sins of murder, or drunkenness, or lewdness, or profaneness, or fighting, acted out in a dialogue; and, besides, the effect would be immoral. But, if you want to show off the folly of vanity, pertness, ill manners, jealousy, ignorance, or any similar fault, by giving an example, I have no objection to it, if it is only done judiciously. Now, in regard to your dialogue, Tom behaved as well as almost any boy would under the same circumstances.

Sam was the rogue; and he, I take it, was only a harmless personification of a pert, self-conceited, but witty young blockhead, who, in the sequel, gets abundantly punished for his impudence. Isn't that the character you intended to portray?"

"Yes, sir, I suppose it is," replied Clinton.

"And do you see, now, why I didn't object to the dialogue?"

"Yes, sir," replied Clinton.

They had now reached their home, and Mr. Davenport took care of the horse, while the boys went after the cows and oxen.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MIDNIGHT ATTACK.

WHISTLER'S wounded finger continued to heal rapidly, and it now occasioned him but little trouble. He did not use his left hand much, however; and one day he was a good deal surprised, and a trifle alarmed, on discovering that the arm itself had become much smaller than the other. He at once showed it to his aunt, who relieved his apprehensions by assuring him that its shrunken appearance was owing to its not being used. She also improved the opportunity to give him a few hints on the importance of exercise to bodily health.

"If you should keep your arm motionless for a long time," she said, "it would finally wither and become useless. So it is with our whole bodies, — they suffer, and fall away, if they do not get exercised enough.

The reason that Clinton is stronger and stouter than you is, that his body has been exercised more than yours. He was quite slender when he was a little child. And it is precisely the same with our minds. If we want to increase any of our faculties, we must make a good use of them, and they will be sure to grow. But, if we don't exercise them, they will fall away, just as your arm has done."

One morning, a few days after the picnic, there was a great commotion on the premises, occasioned by the discovery that some murderous marauder had visited the yard in the night, and taken the lives of a score of Clinton's hens and chickens. A brood of young chickens, which slept in a barrel laid upon its side, apart from the other fowls, were all murdered, together with their mother; while in the hen-house the ground under the roosts was strewn with the bodies of the slaughtered. Clinton rushed into the house in a high state of excitement, on making the discovery, and the whole family hastened to see the bloody spectacle. Many were the exclamations of sorrow and pity, as they gazed upon the bodies of plump, matronly hens, and exemplary pullets, and feeble, infantile chickens,

now stiffened in death, their plumage ruffled and stained with blood. Several of the fowls, however, were missing, having evidently been either devoured or carried off. Among these was one of the lords of the poultry-yard, who, perhaps, had attempted to defend his family from the midnight assassin, and had been carried off bodily, as a trophy of victory. The survivors were silent and melancholy, and the shadow of a great calamity seemed to have settled upon them. The remaining rooster, to be sure, was so ungracious as to crow lustily over the bodies of his murdered household, in the presence of all the family. Whistler charitably suggested that this was a song of triumph for his own escape; but Clinton, who knew the jealous rogue better than his cousin did, thought it was quite as likely that he was exulting over the tragic downfall of his rival. Perhaps, however, with the bravado natural to his race, he affected an indifference and stoicism which he did not feel, and crowed, as boys sometimes whistle in a grave-yard, merely to "keep his courage up."

After the first outburst of regret and pity which the spectacle called forth from all present, their curiosity

was thoroughly awakened to ascertain what animal had committed this cruel outrage upon a happy and peaceful family. After a careful examination of the premises, no track or trace of the creature could be found. All was mystery. There was nothing but the slaughtered victims upon which to found a speculation, and these told no tales against their murderer. Clinton was the first to hazard a guess in regard to the assassin.

"It must have been either a fox or a wild-cat," he said; "don't you think so, father?"

"If I were going to guess, I should say it was a skunk," replied his father.

"O, no, father, — a skunk would n't have killed so many of the fowls, would it?" said Clinton, who was unwilling to admit that so common and despised an animal had done the mischief. "Besides," he added, "we have skunks around here all the time, and why did n't they ever do such a thing before?"

"If I remember right, they have done just such things before," replied his father.

"Well, it was a long time ago, before I owned the fowls," said Clinton.

"It is n't many months since Mr. White caught a skunk in the act of killing his fowls," added Mr. Davenport.

"But they have never disturbed our fowls since I owned them, and that is over five years," suggested Clinton.

"And there is a good reason for that; you have always kept your fowls well secured against wild animals, until this summer," replied his father.

This was true. Clinton was at first very particular to shut up the poultry at night, so that no animal could get at them; but their exemption from attack for several years had gradually allayed all fears on this score, and of late he had not properly secured his charge from the midnight attacks of their natural enemies.

"Well," said Clinton, "I don't believe it was a skunk; I think it was a fox or a wild-cat, or it may have been a 'coon. I mean to borrow Mr. Preston's trap, and see if I can't catch him, to-night."

"I 'll give you fifty cents for his skin, if you catch a 'coon, a wild-cat, or a fox," said his father, as he

turned away from the scene to resume his morning work.

"Agreed; and you shall have it for nothing, if it's a skunk," replied Clinton, with a laugh.

"No, I thank you,—I shan't accept that offer," replied his father.

"Come, Annie, I would n't look at the poor things any longer," said Mrs. Davenport, leading her little daughter away.

"Here, mother," said Clinton, "what am I to do with them? Would n't some of those large ones be good to eat?"

"They may be good enough, for all I know; but I should not like to eat anything that was killed in that way," replied his mother. "Besides, they are hardly fat enough to eat well. You had better bury them in the garden; I don't think they are good for anything else."

"I will do it right away, then," said Clinton; and he and Whistler procured shovels, and began to dig the holes.

"I should like to see a skunk," said Whistler; "do they show themselves around here very often?"

"Yes, I see them occasionally," replied Clinton. "One moonlight evening, last spring, I had been away, and when I came home, I saw one sitting on our door-step; but he walked off as soon as he heard me, and I did n't think it best to follow him."

"They are nasty-looking things, I suppose," said Whistler.

"Why, no; there is nothing very bad-looking about them," replied Clinton. "Their fur is brown, with white stripes, and if it was n't for their odor, they would be hunted for their skins. People sometimes eat skunks when they can't get anything else, and they say the meat is very well-flavored."

"What kind of a trap is it you are going to borrow?" inquired Whistler; "will it kill the animal, or only make a prisoner of him?"

"It is a steel trap, such as they catch wolves with," replied Clinton. "It catches the creature by the leg, and he can't get away, unless he leaves his leg behind."

"Perhaps you will catch a wolf," suggested Whistler.

"No, a wolf did n't do this. He would have eaten or carried off more of the hens," replied Clinton.

"Don't you suppose the wolves come down here from the forests, sometimes?" inquired Whistler

"Yes, I know they do," replied Clinton. "Last winter two men were in the woods, about a dozen miles north of Brookdale, when a deer dashed out from a thicket, within two rods of them, with a large wolf close on to his heels. Before they could raise their rifles the wolf had the deer by the neck; but they fired, and shot them both dead. I saw both of the animals over to the Cross Roads. The wolf was over seven feet long, and he was a savage-looking fellow, I can assure you. Another man, last winter, was crossing a pond on skates, when a pack of wolves made after him, and, in his hurry and fright, he skated into a hole in the ice, and was drowned."

"Do the wolves ever come this way in the summer?" inquired Whistler.

"Yes," replied Clinton; "there are often great fires in the woods, in summer, that burn for weeks, and then the wolves, and bears, and moose, get driven from their quarters, and sometimes they pay us a visit. Mr. Oakley, who lives on the Passagamet river, fifteen miles from here, had ten sheep killed by wolves, about

a year ago. A part of the flock came round the house, and looked frightened, and the folks went over to the pasture where the sheep were kept, to see what the matter was. They found seven of them dead, and some of them were torn dreadfully; but three of them were alive, and were hurt but very little. They only had a little scratch on the throat, that looked as if it might have been made with the point of a pin. They carried these three home, and clipped off the wool around their wounds, and washed off the blood, and put on some salve; but they all died in an hour or two. The wolves poisoned them, or else they were frightened to death."

"And you say bears sometimes prowl around here, too," said Whistler.

"Yes," replied Clinton; "four or five years ago, one was seen over in the woods, where we went the other day when we saw Dick Sneider. Last winter father and I rode over to a logging-camp, in a sleigh, and spent two or three days with the loggers. We had a capital time. We ate with the men, and slept on heaps of leaves, in their log huts. They had rousing fires, burning all night, in the middle of the huts;

and, instead of chimneys, the smoke went off through a large hole in the roof. But that is n't what I was going to tell you about. We stopped one night at 'Uncle Tim's,' as they call him, about half way between here and the camp. He lives in a 'clearing' in the woods, and there 's no other house for miles around. He told me a good many stories about wild beasts, and one of them was about a bear that he killed last fall. One morning he discovered that some creature had made great havoc in his cornfield in the night, and he found the tracks of a bear all over the lot. He saw, by the tracks, that it was a very large and heavy animal; and, as he had a bear-trap, he thought he would try to catch him with it, rather than have a fight with him. So he baited the trap, and set it in the cornfield; but the next morning he found it just as he left it. The bear had walked all around it two or three times; but he knew too much to go into it, and he made his supper off of green corn again. Well, Uncle Tim said his dander was up, then, and he made up his mind that if the bear got any more of his corn, he should take some of his bullets with it. So, in the evening, he took his rifle, and hid himself among

the trees just by the edge of his clearing, pretty near the place where the bear's tracks were. Well, he waited, and waited, hour after hour, but he could n't hear nor see anything of the bear. It was n't very dark, as there was a moon. His wife and two boys, and his big dog, were in the house, waiting and watching as patiently as they could; for Uncle Tim told them not to show themselves unless he gave a loud whistle. Well, about one o'clock in the morning, he thought he heard a slight noise, and, sure enough, there was the old fellow within a few feet of him, and looking directly at him. Uncle Tim took good aim, and then blazed away, with as heavy a charge as his gun would bear. The 'varmint' gave one spring towards him, and fell dead almost at his feet. He weighed about five hundred pounds, and I don't remember how much oil Uncle Tim got out of him, but it was a good lot. He got a bounty from the state, too, for killing him."

"He must be a brave man," said Whistler.

"O, these old pioneers don't mind such things," said Clinton; "they soon get used to bears and wolves. But I saw in a newspaper, the other day, an account

of a fight a little boy had with a bear, that was really worth bragging about. He lived near Lake Umbagog, which is on the line between Maine and New Hampshire, and I believe he was only nine years old. He saw a bear in on oatfield, near the house, and he thought he would pepper him with a few buck shot. The bear was wounded, and showed fight; so the little fellow picked up a club, and went at him. The boy's mother saw the fight, and she gave the alarm to his father and an older brother, who were at work near by; but when the bear saw them coming, he made off as fast as he could. The family gave chase, but they were not well armed, and were obliged to let him escape. Well, a few days after, that same bear was seen near the same place, with a sheep in his mouth; and that same little fellow went at him again, with a club, and made him drop the sheep, and scamper off into the woods. At another time this bear came to the house, when the woman was alone. He put his fore paws on the window sill, and stuck his head and shoulders into the room, and, after he had looked around a little, he walked off without touching anything."

"That is being a little too neighborly. I should n't like to live quite so near the bears as that," said Whistler.

"I should want something more than a club, if I had got to meet one," said Clinton.

"But I should n't be afraid to meet a fox, or a wild-cat, or a 'coon, in the woods, — should you?" added Whistler.

"I should n't want any better fun than to meet a 'coon or a fox," replied Clinton; "but if I had got to tackle a wild-cat, I should want to be pretty well armed. It is n't every man that can 'whip his weight in wild-cats,' as they say out west."

"Why, I had an idea they were a good deal like our house-cats, only they are not tame," said Whistler.*

"They do look something like a cat," replied Clinton, "but they are twice as big, and almost as savage as tigers. I saw a dead one, once. They have little short tails, and very strong, ugly-looking jaws. A boy

* Whistler was partly right. The domestic cat, when deprived of a home, sometimes takes to the woods, and leads a savage life. It is then a wild-cat; but it is a very different pussy, for all that, from the large, tiger-like creature to which that name properly belongs.

that lives at the Cross Roads killed the one I saw. He was hunting rabbits, about half a mile from the village, when he saw the head of a strange-looking animal in a tree right over him. He did n't know what it was, but he concluded to fire; and, just as he did so, the creature sprang right at him. The shot did n't seem to hurt him much, but he was in a terrible rage. The boy dodged him as he leaped from the tree, and then they had a pitched battle for three or four minutes. The fellow got some pretty hard scratches, and had his clothes torn; but he beat the wild-cat with the breach of his gun until he killed him. He lugged the body home, and he felt as grand as any body you ever saw, for a month afterwards. The wild-cat weighed about twenty-five pounds, and he had the skin stuffed, and has got it now."

The slaughtered fowls were now all buried, and the boys went in to breakfast. In the course of the forenoon, after Clinton had done his work, he and his cousin went down to Mr. Preston's, to get the trap. The story of the catastrophe awakened the interest and sympathy of the neighbors, and quite a discussion ensued as to the nature of the enemy that had done

the mischief. Mr. Preston said it would not be at all strange if a wild-cat or fox was prowling around the neighboring woods, but he thought it quite as probable that a skunk had killed the fowls. He did not think it was a raccoon, as, he said, this animal eats only the heads of the poultry it kills. As Mr. Preston was an old logger, having spent his winters in the forests for many years, he was well acquainted with the wild animals in that quarter, and Clinton placed considerable confidence in his opinion. Still, he was not quite satisfied that his chickens had fallen a prey to the despised skunk, and Mr. Preston accordingly hunted up his rusty wolf-trap, and gave him some directions in regard to baiting and setting it.

Ella, who listened to this conversation, seemed somewhat alarmed to hear that the woods around Brookdale were ever visited by such strangers; and when Whistler told her that even wolves and bears sometimes came down into the neighborhood, she declared most vehemently that she should not dare to go out of sight of the house again while she stayed there.

"O, yes, you will; you will come over and see us," said Clinton.

"No, I shan't; you have wild-cats around your neighborhood," she replied.

"But Willie and I will come down with guns, and escort you up and back again, if you're afraid," added Clinton.

"I hate guns; I should be afraid to go with you, if you carried them, — boys are *so* careless with fire-arms," replied Ella.

"Then we 'll come without guns," remarked Willie.

"Yes; and I'm thinking *you* would run as fast as I should, if you saw a wild beast coming," said Ella, laughing.

"No, I should n't, either; I 'd stand my ground as long as any body would," replied Whistler, with some warmth.

"Well, Ella," said Clinton, "I really wish you *would* come over once more, before you and Willie go home; and Em, and Hatty, too, — I want you all to come."

"Well, perhaps we will, after you have caught your wild-cat," said Ella, as the boys moved off.

"She is pretty good at quizzing," said Clinton to his cousin, as they walked away. "I really hope I

shall catch something; if I don't play a joke upon Ella, then, no matter."

"If you do, you will be paid off, with interest, I can promise you that," replied Whistler; and he related an instance in which Ella "came up" with a boy who took the liberty to play a practical joke upon her.

The day was very warm, and the heat of the sun almost overpowering. Mr. Davenport took a long "nooning," as was his custom when the weather was oppressively hot. Throwing himself upon a settle, after dinner, in the coolest room he could find, he sometimes indulged in a nap, but more frequently employed the hour of rest with a book or newspaper, or in conversation with his wife or children, or in thinking over the affairs of the farm. On this occasion, Clinton brought in the trap, and showed it to him. After examining it in silence, he inquired:

"How much is your loss, Clinty?—have you figured it up?"

"No, sir; I haven't thought anything about that," he replied.

"Then it doesn't trouble you much, I presume," said his father.

"No, sir; I care a good deal more for the poor hens than I do for the money," replied Clinton.

"That's right!" said his father; "you've made considerable profit out of your poultry, and you must expect to meet with some losses, once in a while. Losses are inseparable from business; and the wisest way is to make the best of them when we can't avoid them. If a man meets with nothing but prosperity, he is apt to grow reckless in his management, and oppressive towards others; or he becomes wholly absorbed with the world, and forgets that there is a God or a future life. But adversity, if a man knows how to profit by it, will correct these faults. I have met with some pretty serious losses in my day; but I can see, now, that I am better off than I should have been if they had never befallen me."

"Do you think you are better off for being cheated out of everything you owned, when Mr. Jellison failed?" inquired Clinton.

"I have no doubt of it, now, although it was a severe blow to me at the time," replied his father. "I was a young man then, and had set my heart too intently on making money, as though that were the

great object of life. Perhaps, if I had not met with that loss, I should have grown up a miser. I have learned this lesson, on my way through the world: that a man's happiness does n't depend on the amount of money he owns. In one sense, in fact, we do not own anything — we are only stewards. The property is lent to us for the time, and we are bound to make a good use of it. It belongs to the world, or, rather, to God. It was in the world before we came, and it will remain here after we have gone; and we shall have to give an account of the use we make of it while it is in our hands. As I have a claim on all you own, so there is One who has a claim on whatever I possess."

"But I did n't know you had a claim on my money," replied Clinton.

"Have you ever settled for your board, and clothing, and education, and all the other expenses of your bringing up?" inquired his father.

"No, sir," said Clinton.

"Well, your hundred dollars would not go far, if you undertook to pay those bills," continued his father. "More than that, the law of the land gives me a right

to all your earnings until you are twenty-one years old; did you know that?"

"No, sir; I never heard of that before," replied Clinton.

"It is so," resumed his father; "but, in return, the law obliges me to support you, during that time, unless you run away from me, or refuse to obey me. And you will find that this dependence upon others will follow you through life. We never outgrow it, no matter how old or how rich we become. We are all of us beholden to others, but most of all to God, every day of our lives."

This conversation led Clinton to make an estimate of his pecuniary loss during the afternoon, and he found that it amounted to the sum of five dollars and fifty cents. He showed Whistler his account book, which was kept in a neat and accurate manner. In this book he set down all his receipts and expenses on account of the poultry, and at the close of each year he "struck a balance," and ascertained the amount of his profits. At this time he had one hundred dollars in a savings bank, on interest, besides about five dollars in his own hands, — all of which his fowls, and

the labor of his own hands, had earned him. He also owned his stock of poultry, which, before the disaster of the previous night, he valued at about twenty dollars.

After tea the boys baited the trap, and set it in the garden, near the hen-house. They skilfully concealed it under leaves and other litter, leaving only the bait prominent; and, after watching it from the chamber window as long as there was light enough to distinguish anything, they went to bed, to dream of bears, and wolves, and wild-cats, and to see visions of nondescript beasts not to be found in any work on natural history.

CHAPTER X.

THE HOMEWARD TRIP.

"WELL, Clinty, have you caught your wild-cat?" inquired Mr. Preston, the morning after the boys set the trap.

"No, sir; it's so stormy, I suppose he thought he would not go out," replied Clinton.

"Postponed his supper on account of the weather, eh? He must be a very fastidious fellow," added Mr. Davenport.

"Or, perhaps he was afraid he should wear his welcome out, if he went to the same place two nights in succession," suggested Whistler.

"I shan't give him up yet; I mean to keep the trap set till I go to Boston," said Clinton.

The storm, which set in soon after the boys had fixed the trap, continued, with but slight intervals, for

nearly two days. It was quite severe, obliging all the family to keep indoors during its continuance. Clinton and Whistler found a very pleasant, and not altogether unprofitable amusement, during this protracted storm, in constructing a "dissected map" of the United States, which they designed as a present to Whistler's little sister, Ettie. Whistler, who had been taught to draw maps at school, made a handsome copy of the map of the United States, on a single sheet of paper. The first draft included only the boundaries of the states and territories, the principal rivers, chains of mountains, lakes, &c. He then cut apart, with the scissors, the several states and territories. Clinton, who had been preparing a number of thin blocks of wood, of a uniform height, now cut them out into the exact shape of these various sections of the map; and, meanwhile, Whistler was engaged in finishing up each state by itself, inserting the principal towns, coloring the surface, and, finally, pasting the several sections upon the blocks which Clinton had made ready. Clinton also made a neat little box in which to keep it. The whole affair was very well done; and the boys found that the putting of the little

blocks properly together, afforded an interesting and instructive amusement, even to them, familiar as they were with the geography of the country. To Annie, who knew little of this study, the game was even more curious and puzzling.

The storm at length passed away, but only two or three more days remained for Whistler to spend in Brookdale; and, as Clinton was to accompany him home, a good share of their time was occupied in preparing for the journey, and in talking over their plans. The trap was inspected early each morning, but it remained undisturbed; and, although several times freshly baited, not so much as the track of a creature was to be seen around it. Clinton at length lost his faith in its virtues, and returned it to Mr. Preston, the afternoon before he left for Boston.

Whistler was hardly aware how much he had become attached to his uncle's family, until the hour of separation came. Then the old farm-house seemed suddenly invested with a new beauty, and he felt himself drawn towards its inmates by a stronger cord than ever before. There was but little time, however, for farewells or last words of counsel. The travellers

were obliged to be on their way soon after sunrise, and Mr. Davenport had the horse punctually at the door, to take them over to the Cross Roads. A few hasty good-bys, a lingering look behind, and their long journey was commenced. They stopped at Mr. Preston's, and took Ella into their wagon, as she also was going home.

The stage coach came along soon after they reached the Cross Roads, and the three young passengers took their seats within it. For about five hours they were jolted along over rough roads, and steep hills, and log bridges, occasionally passing through pretty villages, or among thrifty farms; but much of the time hemmed in by forests on either side, or surrounded by miles of wild land, from which the timber had been removed. They all were wise enough to take some luncheon with them, and they found a good use for it by the time they reached the end of the stage route.

After purchasing their tickets for Boston, the young travellers found that they had nearly half an hour to spare before the cars would start. Clinton, who had never travelled on a railroad but once before, and had never seen a locomotive except on that occasion, pro-

posed to go and see the machine, which was then receiving its wood and water just outside of the station house. Before going, however, they picked out their seats in the train, and left them and their valises in charge of Ella. The boys then spent some time in looking at the engine, and watching the movements of those who had it in charge. After the wood-box and water-tank of the tender were filled, the machine was backed to its place at the head of the train. One of the men now jumped off, and the other began to oil some of the joints and bearings of the engine.

Although a locomotive was something of a curiosity to Clinton, it was soon evident that he knew more about it than many boys of his age, to whom a railroad train is an every-day sight. His mechanical taste had led him to read whatever he could find about steam engines, and, by the help of his father, he had acquired a pretty accurate idea of the principles involved in their construction. He was thus able to name and explain the action of parts of the locomotive of which even Willie had no definite notion.

The train was fast filling up, and the boys now took their seats. The signal to start was soon given, the

engine gave a jerk and a rapid succession of puffs, and the cars began to glide over their iron course. The views from the car windows now took up the attention of Ella and the boys. The solemn forest and the bustling village,—the thrifty farm and the wild and rocky pasture,—the rough old hills and the narrow, winding valley,—the quiet river and the noisy mills upon its banks,—these were the scenes that passed before them in a rapid panorama.

They had proceeded fifteen or twenty miles, and their interest in the outside world was beginning to flag a little, when the conductor of the train came along, and, taking a vacant seat by the side of Whistler, commenced a conversation with a man seated behind them.

"Reed has got one of his odd fits to-day," said the conductor, in a tone which Whistler could not help overhearing.

"Has he?" inquired the other man.

"Yes; he's as short as pie-crust," replied the conductor.

"Well, Reed always was subject to these cross spells from a boy," said the other. "We were as

intimate as two mice in a stocking when we went to school; but he used to have the sulks terribly then, once in a while, and would n't speak to any body all day long. I reckon it has grown upon him ever since."

"Yes, I think it has," said the conductor.

"But Reed is as good-hearted a fellow as ever lived, after all, and a *first-rate* engineer," added the passenger, laying great stress on the last adjective.

"Yes, he is the best engineer that runs on this road, by all odds," said the conductor. "He is always on hand, and he is cautious and careful almost to a fault. He is cool, too, and thinks quick when any accident happens."

"He understands machinery pretty well, I should think," observed the passenger.

"Yes; he knows every bolt and screw in his engine just as well as you know the way from your house to your shop," replied the conductor.

"Well, an engineer's berth is a pretty responsible one,—more so than yours. Do n't you think so?" inquired the passenger.

"Yes; so far as the safety of the train is concerned,

more depends on him than on the conductor, or any body else," replied the other.

"But if every thing goes right, the 'gentlemanly conductor' takes all the glory," said the passenger, with a sly chuckle.

"Yes, and he is saddled with all the blame if every thing does n't go right," retorted the conductor.

"No, it is n't so; people remember that there is such a person as the engineer when an accident happens, and that 's about the only time they *do* think of him," replied the passenger.

"Well, the conductor is held responsible for the train; but, after all, a great deal depends upon the engineer, as you say," said the conductor. "He has his hands full every moment while the train is in motion. He must judge of and regulate the speed, and see that the boiler is kept supplied with water. At the same time, he must keep his eye on the track, and see that there are no switches wrong, nor broken rails, nor men, nor teams, nor other obstructions, in the way. He must look out for signals of caution, and keep his machinery well oiled. He must watch his engine closely, to see that every part works right;

and if he hears any unusual noise about the machinery, he must discover the cause of it. When the train approaches a station, in order to bring it to a stand at the right spot, he must take into account the speed and weight of his train, the number of brakemen, the grade of the road, — whether upward, downward, or level, — the state of the track, — whether dry, wet, or icy, &c., &c. Besides all these things, he must be ready to act instantaneously if any accident happens, and to do two or three things at the same moment, if necessary. A man ought to have a pretty good head to do all this, day after day, and never make a blunder."

"That's a fact," replied the other. "We're going at a pretty fair jog, now," he added, after a moment's pause.

"Yes," said the conductor; "the road is very straight along here, and we get up an extra speed. I suppose we are going at the rate of forty miles an hour, now."

"Did you ever think what the consequences would be if the engineer should lose the control of the engine when it is going at full speed?" inquired the passenger.

"There is n't much danger of that," replied the conductor; "but, still, such things have happened. We had an engine break its throttle-valve once on this road, and the only way the engineer could stop it was by putting out the fire. It ran about three miles before he could bring it to a stand. If such an accident should happen near the end of the line, it might do a good deal of mischief. But the greatest accident of this kind that ever I saw, happened when I was out west. I was in a train that was stopping at a dépôt, when a freight train suddenly came along, and run into us. Our engineer and firemen saw that a collision was coming, and jumped from the engine. Well, sir, the force of the blow uncoupled the locomotive and tender from the baggage-car, and actually jerked back the lever, and started the engine under a full pressure of steam. She shot forward like an arrow, and we could see her for several minutes flying over the track at the rate of seventy miles an hour. The furnace had just been crammed with wood, and there was a full head of steam on. The distance from Cincinnati was only fourteen miles, and we knew she would get over the ground in about twelve minutes if the track was

clear, and then would come the crash. We listened, and almost expected to hear it. But, as good luck would have it, the furnace door flew open, and that stopped the draught, and the runaway came to a dead halt just before it reached the city. I call that a pretty narrow escape."

"Yes, it was, truly," remarked the passenger.

The train was now approaching a station, and the conductor broke off the conversation, to which Whistler had listened with much interest, and left the car.

Railroad travelling, after the first hour or two, usually becomes rather tedious, and the experience of our young travellers was not materially different from that of older people. Now and then, however, as they dashed on, an incident served to enliven the way. The attention which the train every where attracted, although it must have been as familiar a sight as the rising of the sun, accorded well with Clinton's feelings; but he was somewhat at a loss to account for the fact itself. In the villages and at the dépôts people stared at the engine and cars as intently as if they had never before seen such a sight. In passing over a river they were greeted with cheers, the swinging

of hats, and the elevating of oars, by a party of boys in a small boat. At one station a little black dog

had the presumption to run a race with the train as it started up, but he soon gave up the contest. A horse in a pasture kicked defiance at his iron namesake, with heels high in the air, and galloped to the remotest bounds of his enclosure. A flock of sheep in a field huddled tremblingly together, and then broke the solid phalanx, and hastily fled, as the train went thundering by. A brood of chickens snuggled under their mother's ample wings; and even that most grave and unimpassioned of domestic animals, the cow, many of which they passed, almost invariably looked up with a won-

dering expression of countenance, and seemed more than half inclined to ask what the fuss was all about. Such is the homage which man and beast ever pay to the railroad train, the novelty and wonder of which are scarcely diminished by our familiarity with it.

It was late in the evening when our young travellers reached their journey's end. Ella's brother, Ralph, was waiting their arrival at the dépôt, and his fair young face lit up with joy when he saw his sister and Whistler descend from the train. As Ella was encumbered with a trunk, he procured a place for her and her baggage in a coach, and then walked, with the other boys, towards the quarter of the city in which both families resided.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CITY HOME.

WHEN Clinton awoke the next morning, and looked around upon the large, high chamber, and the strange furniture, and caught a glimpse through the windows of a long row of brick buildings, he could, at first, hardly tell where he was. Consciousness quickly returned, however, as he called to mind the long journey of the day before, and the warm greetings which he and Whistler received at the end of it. His cousin, whose bed he shared, was still soundly sleeping, although the sun's bright rays had found their way into the room. People are apt to be more wasteful of their morning hours in the city than in the country. Clinton's curiosity to see how the neighborhood looked by daylight would not allow him to remain long in bed. He got up quickly, dressed himself,

and was peering inquisitively from the windows, when a loud scratching at the door led him to open it, and in sprang Bouncer, Whistler's handsome and intelligent dog. With one leap he was on the bed, and in a moment the sleeper was awakened, and engaged in a lively frolic with his four-footed friend.

"O, you black rogue!" said Whistler, seizing him by the fore paws; "you're glad I've got home, are you? Then kiss me, that's a good fellow. There! that will do! Yes, he's glad his master's got home, so he is; and he almost flew off the handle last night, didn't he? and he couldn't wait for him to get up this morning, could he? Well, his master's glad to see him, too, so he is. There, sir, you've kissed me enough; now jump down, and let me get up. Go and kiss him," pointing to Clinton. "That's cousin Clinton. Don't you know him?"

"You ought to know me, Bouncer, for you sent me a wag of your tail in a letter last spring," said Clinton, alluding to a rough pen and ink sketch of Bouncer's tail which Whistler's father had enclosed in a letter to Clinton, among sundry little love messages from the family.

"O, yes, I remember that!" said Whistler, with a laugh, as he jumped out of bed. "What did you think when you saw it? Did n't you laugh?"

"I rather think we all laughed a little over it," replied Clinton. "I had some idea of sending you back one of our cat's purs in my letter, but I did n't know exactly how to do it."

"But what did you get up for, and leave me here asleep? Is that the way to serve a fellow?" inquired Whistler.

"O, I thought I would n't disturb you," replied Clinton. "I wanted to see that splendid view you told me of when we were on Bald Peak. Do you remember?"

"Yes; ninety-five millions of miles. But, you see, it 's all sky-scape; there is n't much landscape to boast of," said Whistler.

"No, I see there is n't," replied Clinton, as he glanced at the interminable brick block, with its row of low wooden sheds in the rear, all of uniform size and pattern, and its little bits of open spaces between the sheds, which served as back yards.

The row of houses, the backs of which bounded the

prospect from Whistler's window, was situated on a street parallel with that on which Mr. Preston lived. Dwellings and stores are usually built in blocks, or joined together, in cities and towns, because the land is too valuable to admit of an open space around each separate building. Mr. Davenport's house was a fair specimen of this style of building. It was not far from the centre of a block of about twenty houses, which were very nearly uniform in their external appearance. It was of brick, and three stories high, besides the basement and attic. There were two entrances to each house, — the front door, reached by four stone steps, and a door opening into a narrow archway, which led to the back yard. An iron balustrade extended the entire length of the block, in front of the second story. Add to this a brick sidewalk, with a line of young trees near the edge, and a clean and well-paved street, and you have a tolerably distinct picture of the outside of Whistler's home.

Whistler's chamber was in the third story, on the side of the house farthest from the street. It was quite neatly furnished. The floor was carpeted, and the windows curtained. It contained a bureau, with a

mirror attached to it, a small dressing-table, and several chairs, all of which, together with the bedstead, were painted a light chocolate color, ornamented with dark stripes. In one corner was a marble wash-basin, supplied with Cochituate water by means of a pipe, and furnished with an outlet at the bottom, connecting with another pipe, to let off the dirty water. There was a grate in the room, and a marble mantel-piece, over which hung a large engraved likeness of Washington, in a rosewood frame. On the side of the room opposite the bed there was a small book-rack, which was filled with volumes and pamphlets, many of which belonged to Whistler. There was a closet in the room, in which he kept his clothing, and many of his playthings. The general appearance of the chamber bore witness to the neat and orderly habits of its occupant.

The boys had now dressed and washed themselves, and brushed their hair, and went down stairs, followed by Bouncer. In the sitting-room they found Mr. Davenport, in his dressing-gown, so absorbed in his morning paper that he apparently did not notice their entrance. Not wishing to disturb him, they soon left

the room, but had not gone far when he called to them in a loud and rather authoritative tone:

"Boys! boys! come back!"

They returned, wondering what the matter was, and Clinton, at least, feeling a little alarmed at such a stern call. They stood, just inside the door, about a minute, before Mr. Davenport spoke; and then, lifting his eyes from the paper, in a very sedate manner, he said:

"Good morning, boys."

"Good morning, sir," replied the boys, in a somewhat reserved and confused manner.

Another awkward pause followed, during which Mr. Davenport was engrossed with his paper. Whistler at length inquired:

"Is that all, father?"

"That is all, — what more would you have?" replied his father, a twinkle of fun now appearing in his eyes, and about the corners of his mouth

They left him to the quiet enjoyment of his joke and his paper, and went into the dining-room, as the apartment was called where the meals of the family were spread. There they found Mrs. Davenport,

assisting in putting the breakfast upon the table, while Ettie, Whistler's little sister, was arranging the chairs. These, with Margaret, the domestic, constituted the whole of Mr. Davenport's family at this time.

The breakfast-bell was rung, and the family gathered around the table, and soon commenced a lively conversation, much of which was addressed to Clinton.

"I believe this is your first appearance in Boston, Clinton," observed Mr. Davenport.

"Yes, sir, it is," replied Clinton.

"Well, you will see a great many strange sights, as you go about the city," continued his uncle. "Boston is n't a London, nor a New York; but it beats Brookdale, by considerable, in business, wealth and population. When I first visited Boston, thirty years ago, I thought it was about the biggest city in the world, and I can assure you it has grown a trifle since then. But I've got a word of advice to give you, and that reminds me of it. You don't want to appear green, verdant, raw, countryfied, as we city folks say?"

"No, sir," replied Clinton, in some trepidation at this startling array of epithets.

"Well, then," continued his uncle, "you must follow

these three rules. First, don't stare at anything; that means, don't look at anything as though it were new or strange. The second rule is, don't be astonished at anything. And the third is like unto it, — don't admire anything."

Clinton looked perplexed. Sight-seeing was one of the principal objects of his visit to the city; and a pretty kind of sight-seeing that would be, he thought, if he could not look at anything, nor evince any surprise or pleasure, for fear of violating the cold proprieties of city manners. Whistler also shared in his perplexity; but, believing there was a "catch" somewhere in his father's advice, he said:

"Father is n't in earnest; he does n't mean what he says, I know."

"Yes, I am in earnest," replied his father.

"But, how can he see the city, if he must n't look at anything?" inquired Whistler.

"That 's another affair, altogether," said Mr. Davenport. "I was telling him how to avoid appearing green, not how to see the sights. When I first came to the city myself, I suppose I was grass-green, — fast color, warranted to wash, — although I did n't know it

then. I used to go staring about at every thing and every body, looking into all the shop windows, reading all the signs, and seeing more wonders than there were chimneys in town. This used to provoke my brother, who had lived in the city a whole year, and had grown wonderfully genteel in his notions. He carried himself as stiff as a poker, and every time I turned my head he would say, 'Don't stare about so! you act like a regular greenhorn!' At last I got quite angry with him, and I told him, right up and down, that I did n't care if I was green, — it was my favorite color; I liked it; I gloried in it; I should be just as green as I pleased, and he need n't throw it in my face any more. Now, if you want to see the sights, Clinton, I don't know as you can do any better than I did; but, if you do not want people to suppose that you are not accustomed to the city, then you can follow the rules I have given."

"I want to see things; I don't care whether people think I'm from the country, or not," replied Clinton.

"Very sensibly said, and I am happy to see that you take after your uncle," said Mr. Davenport. "But we city folks are queer people. We get up all

manner of wonderful clap-traps and contrivances, to astonish our country cousins, and then, if they look at them, we laugh, and tell them they 're green. But all the greenies don't come from the country, by a good deal. I 'll warrant you see a specimen from the city, now and then, down in Brookdale. How was it? — did the cows chase you, Whistler, or did n't they appreciate your verdancy?"

"No, sir, they did n't chase me; but I suppose it was because feed was uncommonly good," replied Whistler.

"Pretty fair," said his father, who always relished a joke.

"Do cows ever eat boys, father?" inquired Ettie, who had soberly listened to the conversation, but apparently without fully comprehending the drift of it.

This question, asked with all gravity, and affording such a fine specimen of the very thing they were talking about, — city verdancy, — was received with a general laugh, which sent the tears brimming to Ettie's eyes, when her father kindly replied:

"No, darling, the cows don't eat boys; but they

sometimes chase them, and toss them in the air with their horns, when they feel cross."

"When we went to ride, the other day," continued Ettie, "we saw a cow shaking her head at a dog, and running at him; and the dog kept jumping before her, and barking right in her face. She wanted to hook him, did n't she?"

"Yes," said her father; "and if the dog had n't been a little too spry for her, she would have sent him spinning into the air, just as you would toss up your doll."

The conversation now changed to other topics, which we need not follow. It was not without an object that Mr. Davenport introduced the subject that has just been alluded to. This object was twofold. First, he wished to put Whistler on his guard against manifesting any impatience or unkindness if his cousin, in their walks about town, should happen to look at things pretty hard. And then, again, he thought it would be well enough to hint to Clinton, in a delicate way, that prolonged and excessive staring at novelties in the public streets, is regarded as a mark of rusticity by well-bred people. He knew that Clinton would not

attempt to follow the rules he gave; neither did he suppose he would imitate his own example — somewhat exaggerated, no doubt — and make himself "as green as he pleased." Curiosity would forbid the first, and that regard for the opinions of others which we all feel, deny it though we may, would prevent the other. He left it for his nephew's good sense to find "the golden mean" between these two extremes.

CHAPTER XII.

ROMANCE AND REALITY.

CLINTON'S first day in the city was diligently devoted to sight-seeing, under the direction of Whistler. As it was Saturday, and the last day of Whistler's vacation, they were both naturally anxious to make the best use of the time. It would be no easy matter to track them through the crowded and intricate streets, and mark the weary miles of brick sidewalk they travelled over, now pausing to look into a gay shop window, or to gaze at an imposing building; now sauntering along the water's edge, amid a forest of shipping and long ranges of granite warehouses; now making a pleasant detour to the Common, and resting themselves under the shadow of its lofty trees; and now picking their way through the narrow streets of the poor, with their tipsy rows of weak-jointed buildings, their plenitude of foreign faces and strange

brogues, and their astonishing overflow of infantile humanity, scattered all along the sidewalks, in undress, half-dress, and almost no dress at all. Nor were these the only novelties that attracted the notice of Clinton. The constant succession of strange faces of every conceivable type, the curious variety in dress and manners, the novel vehicles and equipages in the streets, — these and many other things arrested his attention at every step, and often suggested remarks that seemed very droll to Whistler.

At length, however, the boys were both forced to confess that they were very tired; and towards the middle of the afternoon Clinton concluded that he had seen enough for one day, and proposed to Whistler to return home. His feet, unused to the brick and stone pavement, were now so sore that he walked with difficulty; and he declared that he felt more fatigued than he should if he had hoed corn all day. They accordingly took the shortest route home. Just before they reached the house, the bell in a church steeple which they were passing began to toll.

"What is that for — a funeral?" inquired Clinton.

"No, it's for a fire, I suppose; they don't toll the bells for funerals in Boston," replied Whistler.

"Is it a fire? — let's go to it!" exclaimed Clinton, forgetting, in his excitement, his weary limbs and tender feet.

"No, I would n't; we're too tired to run to a fire now," said Whistler. "Besides, it's a great way off; I believe it's over to South Boston. Let me count again."

The tolling, which had ceased for a minute, was now resumed, and six loud strokes were given, followed by another pause.

"Yes, the fire's in District No. 6; that's South Boston," continued Whistler.

"How far is it from here?" inquired Clinton, who still felt inclined to go to the fire.

"It can't be less than a mile, and it may be two, if it's in the further end of South Boston," replied Whistler.

"Nobody seems to be going to it. Why, I should think every body would run when the bells ring for fire," said Clinton, who was surprised to see how little notice was taken of the alarm.

"The firemen run, but other people don't mind the alarm, unless they see the light or the smoke," replied Whistler.

An engine now came along, making a great noise as it rattled over the pavements, although there were no bells upon it, and but little shouting among the men who had charge of it. It was very gayly painted, and decorated with highly-polished brass mountings. There were only about a dozen men at the rope when the engine first came in sight; but their ranks soon filled up by the arrival of other members of the company, and the engine went spinning through the street at a rapid rate, followed by a swarm of ragged boys. Clinton was more than half disposed to fall in with the crowd of urchins; but, perceiving that Willie had no idea of joining in the race, he prudently concluded to forego the pleasure.

The boys had now reached the house, and, on throwing themselves into comfortable seats, began to realize how tired they were. They found Ettie at full length upon the floor, engaged in putting together the dissected map which the boys had made for her.

Her knowledge of geography was so slight, that the puzzle was anything but a simple one to her.

"What 's the matter, Sissy? — can't you put it together right?" inquired Clinton.

"Yes, I can, *almost*," replied Ettie; "but two or three of these pieces are real ugly, — they won't go in any where."

"Let me see if I can't help you," added Clinton, getting down upon the floor with his little cousin.

"I 'd rather find it out myself," replied Ettie, timidly.

"O, well, then, I won't meddle with it," said Clinton. "You 're just like me; I don't like to have folks show me how to do things, when I can find out myself."

Clinton could not repress a quiet smile as he glanced at the map, and witnessed the strange positions which some of the states had assumed. Illinois and Mississippi had exchanged places, both apparently quite unconscious that they had "got into the wrong pew." Tennessee had turned half a somerset, and was standing upon her head. Maine was vainly trying to fill the space that rightfully belonged to New

York, while for the last-named state no place had yet been found.

"What a curious thing that fire-alarm is! Do you understand how it works, Willie?" inquired Clinton.

"Yes, I've heard it all explained," replied Whistler. "In the first place, the city is divided into seven fire districts. In each of these districts there are a number of little cast-iron boxes, fastened to the sides of buildings, such as I showed you on Faneuil Hall. These are the signal stations. When a fire breaks out near one of these stations, the watchman, or the man who keeps the key, goes to the box and turns the crank in it slowly six times. That sends the alarm along the wires to the central office, in Court Square, and the man there knows just where it came from, and he strikes the number of the district upon the bells. There are about forty of those signal boxes, and each has its wire running to the central office. Then there is another set of wires that lead from the office to the bells."

"All the bells in the city strike at the same time, don't they?" inquired Clinton.

"No, there is no need of ringing all the bells," replied Whistler. "There are only seventeen bells, I believe, connected with the alarm, and these all strike together. The ringing is done by machinery, something like the striking part of a town clock. It has a weight, and an electro-magnet; and the power that sets it in motion comes from the great battery in the central office. If the fire is put out before all the engines get there, an engineer goes to the nearest signal box and telegraphs 'all out,' and the man in the central office gives the signal on the bells, and then the firemen go home."

"It's a complete arrangement, is n't it? I should think the firemen would like it. It must save them a good many steps," said Clinton.

"It does," added Whistler. "Before we had this telegraph there used to be a great many more false alarms of fire than there are now. Besides, when there *is* a fire, it saves them a good many steps in finding it."

Mr. Davenport now came in, and, after a few words with Ettie, who had not yet mastered the secret of the dissected map, he added, turning to the boys:

"Well, young gentlemen, have you seen all the sights, and got home at this time of day?"

"No, sir, we have n't seen half of them; but we got pretty tired, and thought we 'd been about enough for one day," replied Clinton.

"And you looked at everything just as hard as you pleased, did you?" continued his uncle.

"Yes, sir," replied Clinton.

"But he did n't act green at all, father," added Whistler.

"My feet got real sore, though," said Clinton, whose modesty led him to turn the subject. "I told Willie I 'd rather hoe corn all day than walk about the roads here,—I mean the streets."

"Well, I 'm about used up, too," said his uncle. "I 've been cudgelling my brains all day over a very intricate insurance case, and I believe I don't understand it now quite so well as I did when I began. Why, Clinton, hoeing corn is real fun compared with much of the work that we city folks have to do. If you were to live here, and earn your living, you would have to put up with worse things than sore feet. Many country people seem to think that we have

nothing to do but to sit in our armchairs, and read the papers, and discuss the news, and take money; but if they could exchange work with us a little while, they would be more contented with their lot forever after. They work hard and get tired, I know; but we not only get tired, but sick, too, and worry and fret ourselves into our graves, while they are in the prime of life. They work out in the pure air, while we are stived up in little hot rooms, breathing everything but the odors of heaven. After all, the country's the place to enjoy life. Don't you think so, Whistler?"

"Yes, sir, the country's the place for me," replied Whistler. "When I'm a man I mean to have a great farm, and have it stocked with the best horses, and cows, and sheep, and pigs, and poultry. And you'll come and live with me, too; won't you, father?"

"Yes, I think I will, if you lump me in with the pigs, and poultry, and other live stock," said his father, with an assumed air of offended dignity.

"No, father, I didn't lump you with the stock; I put a period after them, and began a new sentence with you," replied Whistler.

"I think it must have been a very brief period; however, I'll take your word for it," added his father. "But, speaking of the country, I suspect you will find playing and working on a farm two very different things. At any rate, I shall advise you not to invest your funds very deeply in agricultural improvements, until you have worked on a farm a year or two as a hand."

"But I thought you just said farming was the best employment for a man," observed Whistler, in some perplexity.

"I did say what was equivalent to that," resumed his father; "but all men are not fit for farmers. Some are too lazy; some are too genteel; some don't know enough; some know too much, in their own estimation, and so get their living by their wits; some are too uneasy to stay long enough in one spot to raise a crop of six-weeks beans; some haven't the bodily strength to work on a farm; and some are too tricky to follow any honest calling. Then there are others who were born to be sailors, or mechanics, or students, or political leaders, or merchants, or doctors, or clergymen, or lawyers. They have special talents for these or other

professions, and, of course, they can't be farmers. You might as well try to drown a man who was born to be hung, as try to make a farmer of a man that was born to 'plough the sea.' But the great body of men do not have these particular talents. They are about as well fitted for one common employment as for another, and so they decide on the one that they consider the most easy, profitable, and genteel; and it is just here that they oftentimes make their great mistake. Are you going to sleep over my lecture, Clinton?" he abruptly added, on observing that his nephew had partially closed his eyes.

"No, sir, I understood every word," quickly replied Clinton, slightly blushing.

"Because, if you were, I thought I should like to keep you company," continued Mr. Davenport. "It's a rather dry subject, I know; but it will soon be one of practical importance to you, and Whistler, too. Have you made up your mind what profession you should like to follow, Clinton?"

"No, sir,—not exactly," replied Clinton. "I like farming very well, but I've thought I should rather be a merchant than anything else."

"Why do you think you should like to be a merchant?" inquired his uncle.

Clinton was somewhat at a loss for an answer; but at length he replied, with some misgivings:

"Why, it must be fine to own ships and warehouses, and do a great business, and make lots of money, and have everything you want, and be looked up to by every body. Besides, the merchant can have his farm, too, if he likes."

"But you have tried farming, and you say you like that pretty well?" inquired his uncle.

"Yes, sir," replied Clinton.

"Well," resumed Mr. Davenport, "let me tell you one thing. With you, mercantile life is all romance, just as farming is to your cousin. On the other hand, farming is real to you, while Whistler has had a chance to observe something of the dark side of mercantile and professional life. When you think of being a merchant, you think only of fine ships, and great warehouses, and sumptuous dwellings, and the portly and dignified men who rule on 'change. You don't think of the early years of drudgery and poverty most of these men went through, or of the temptations

they were exposed to, which, perhaps, overcame a score of their companions for every one that escaped; you don't think how they have risked health, and perhaps lost it; you don't think what fierce struggles they have encountered, what crushing losses they have met, and what a weight of care rests upon them night and day; you don't think it is possible that they will yet meet with overwhelming reverses, and die in poverty; and, more than all, you don't think that these successful merchants are themselves exceptions to the great mass of the profession, who were only moderately successful, if they did not wholly fail. Is it not so?"

"Yes, sir, I never thought much of the dark side," replied Clinton.

"I do not say this to discourage you from being a merchant," resumed his uncle. "I would discourage no boy from entering any honest calling, if he chooses it, and appears to be fitted to it. I don't know but that you have special qualifications for the mercantile profession. If you have, I would advise you to make that your business. Otherwise, you had better remain where you are. At all events, you ought to look at

your favorite profession on all sides, dark as well as bright, before you tie yourself down in it for life. To sum up, as we legal gentlemen say — but we ought to have the decision reported; have you got a scrap of paper, Willie?"

"Yes, sir, — here's a piece."

"Well, you shall be clerk of the court, and write down the decision. Take your pencil, and write as I dictate, commencing each sentence upon a new line."

Whistler followed his father's directions, and the result was the following memoranda:

"All men ought to follow some useful employment.

"Every man ought to choose that employment in which he can be most useful and successful.

"Agriculture is the primitive and natural employment of man.

"It is an employment which combines the greatest number of advantages with the fewest evils and temptations, and is therefore best fitted to secure the happiness and good of mankind.

"It is an employment which must ever demand the hands of the great bulk of the race.

"But the state of human society, and the interests of the race, render many other professions necessary.

"God gives certain persons special talents for these

special callings, so that they enter them as if by instinct.

"Many others are providentially thrown into them, having no particular choice or inclination in the matter.

"Others still enter them from choice.

"Those who enter any profession from choice, should do so deliberately and understandingly, and not suffer themselves to be misled by a thin veil of romance.

"All employments are honorable, so far as they are useful in themselves, and are pursued in an honorable manner."

Mr. Davenport read the above after Whistler had taken it down, and then handed it back to him, saying:

"There, Willie, you have a legal opinion, without fee. You may keep it among your valuables, and give Clinton a copy, too, if he wants one. You may not fully understand these principles now, but you will by-and-by, and they will be of great value to you, if you follow them."

CHAPTER XIII.

SIGHT-SEEING.

"NOW for school, once more!" exclaimed Whistler, as he threw his well-filled satchel over his back, fifteen minutes before eight o'clock Monday morning. "Don't you feel queerly at the beginning of a term? I do. I 'm glad to go to school again, and yet I feel sort of bad, too, because the vacation is over. I feel worse than usual now, because I can't go round with you."

"You need n't think of that; I can find my way about town alone," said Clinton.

"You can tell about that better to-night," replied Whistler.

"Well, I won't crow till I get out of the woods, at any rate," said Clinton. "But I 'm going with you as far as your schoolhouse, — are you ready?"

"Yes, — come," replied Whistler.

They walked to the schoolhouse, accompanied by Bouncer, and remained together till the bell summoned Whistler to his seat, and then Clinton started upon his first exploration, alone. Turning his face towards the business section of the city, which was in a northerly direction from his uncle's house, and occasionally whistling to Bouncer, who was still looking wistfully towards the schoolhouse, he walked leisurely along, with the air of one who is determined to see everything that is worth seeing. Bouncer did not think it worth while to favor him with his company; but Clinton found plenty of other dogs in his wanderings, of all sorts and sizes, — quite as many, in fact, as he wished to see. One of these dogs, which he encountered in a narrow alley, amused him very much. He was harnessed into a little cart, and trotted along quite briskly with his load. Two boys accompanied him, who appeared to be Irish. One of them was quite large, and wore a coat which seemed intended for his father.

He had a little whip, with which he enforced the orders he was constantly shouting to the dog. The other boy was much smaller, and ran behind, pushing the cart. The load consisted of several bundles, tied up in handkerchiefs. They contained dirty clothes, which the boys were collecting for their mother, who was a washerwoman.

The next object that attracted Clinton's notice was a group of busts and images, arranged upon a board, which a young man carried upon the top of his head. Clinton thought it rather strange that he should carry so heavy a burden in such a way; but the images were of plaster, and hollow, and were much lighter than they appeared. The man was an Italian; and whenever he met a gentleman, or saw a lady at a window, he would call out, "E-me-ges!—buy any e-me-ges?" in his most persuasive tone. He was a mild-eyed, dark-complexioned man, not very neat in his personal

appearance, and his clothing was a good deal bepatched, as you will see by the engraving.

In the course of the morning an incident happened to Clinton which made him smile many a time during the day, as it came to mind. In passing a shop, in front of which several birds were hung out in cages, he noticed that the door of one cage was open, and that its tenant was on the outside, apparently meditating a flight. The bird was nearly the size of a pigeon, but he did not know what it was. Stepping into the shop, he said:

"One of your birds has got his cage door open, sir, and is hopping all around outside."

"I know it,—but he won't go off," replied the man. "We leave the door open purposely, and let him have the run; he never leaves the premises."

"O, I didn't think of that," stammered Clinton, a slight blush mantling his cheeks.

"Never mind; I'm just as much obliged to you as though he *had* broken out," added the man. "You intended to do an act of kindness, and you ought to have the credit of it. Won't you walk in and look at the birds? We've got a pretty large collection."

Clinton thankfully accepted the invitation, and found a large room entirely filled with birds, this being the sole article in which the man dealt. The collection embraced birds of almost every description, from an eagle to a Java sparrow. Many of them were very rare and beautiful. The singing birds seemed to vie with one another, to see which should make the loudest noise; and the deafening clatter was by no means improved by the occasional rough and discordant note of some unmusical member of the family. In addition to the living birds, there were also many stuffed ones, for the owner of the collection was a taxidermist. A taxidermist is one who is skilled in preparing and preserving the skins of birds, or other animals, so as to represent their natural appearance.

After walking an hour or more about the business portion of the city, examining the sights in a leisurely way, Clinton suddenly found himself approaching the beautiful Common, of which Boston is justly proud. It took him some time to reconcile his mind to its unexpected location, for it seemed to him that he ought to be going from it instead of towards it. How-

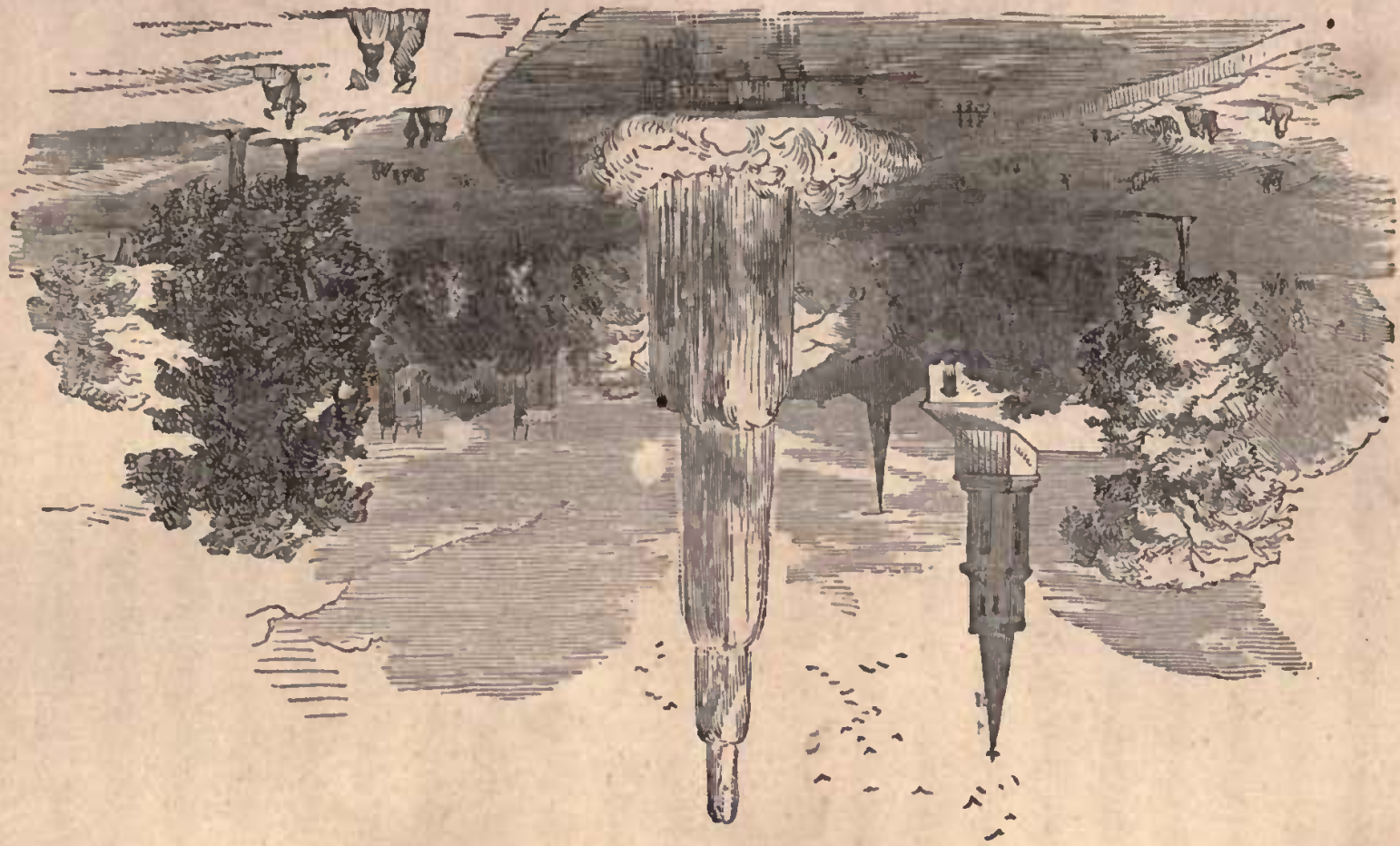
ever, there it was, and there was no disputing that. And he was not very sorry, either, for he began to feel tired, and there are plenty of seats and acres of soft grass on the Common. Entering the grounds at the gate opposite Park-street Church, he threw himself upon the grass, in the shade of a large tree, on a spot which commanded a view of the greater part of the enclosure.

The Common contains forty-eight acres, the surface of which is agreeably diversified, much of it being broken into gentle swells. A vast amount of money has been expended in beautifying it. A tall and handsome iron fence surrounds it, which is nearly six thousand feet long, and cost upwards of a hundred thousand dollars. Nicely gravelled walks, shaded by trees, run around the enclosure, and cross it in various directions. These walks are lit by gas, at night. The trees number nearly two thousand, and comprise eighteen or twenty varieties, but about half of them are elms. Scattered over the Common are several cast-iron hydrants, from which streams of Cochituate water are always flowing, for the refreshment of the thirsty. There is also a beautiful pond, — the "Frog Pond" of

olden times, — which is supplied with one of the finest fountains on the continent.

Such was the scene spread out before Clinton, as he sat upon the grass. Add to the picture the scattered groups of well-dressed people who were threading the walks or lounging on the seats, the merry children gambolling upon the grass, and the birds flitting among the trees, and you have made up a sight well worth seeing.

As Clinton sat enjoying the scene, a huge column of water suddenly burst forth from the pond, with a noise plainly perceptible, even at his distance from it. It was the fountain. Forgetting everything else, he ran with all speed towards it, for he had never seen it; and, as it was allowed to play but seldom, owing to a scarcity of water at that time, he had hardly dared to hope that his curiosity would be gratified. His haste was needless, however, for it kept on playing, and he had ample leisure to examine and enjoy it. It sent up a tall jet, which tapered almost to a point, while a cloud of spray and vapor rose from the base. The water sparkled gloriously in the sunlight, and the hues of the rainbow danced among the mists. Clinton



sat down under a tree, and drank to his fill of the beautiful scene.

This fountain has a dozen or more different jets. The highest one rises to the height of ninety-eight feet, under favorable circumstances, and is fed through an open pipe three inches in diameter. A pipe six inches in diameter throws the water about eighty feet high. Another, with the whole breadth of twelve inches, reaches but about forty feet. There is a jet which is set at an angle, designed to play against the wind. There are also jets which represent a variety of figures. One is called the "willow," from its resemblance to that tree. Another is the "lily," which sends out three side jets, representing the petals, and an upright one in the centre, forming the pointal of the flower. Another is the "vase," and very graceful and picturesque it is. The amount of water consumed by the fountain when it is in play is almost incredible. The water rushes out with immense force; and some of the larger jets, if kept in operation perpetually, would nearly or quite exhaust the regular daily supply from Lake Cochituate. Of course the luxury can

be indulged in only occasionally, and for a few hours at a time.

As Clinton sat gazing at the fountain, the majestic column of water began to falter, and almost instantly lowered its proud crest and disappeared, leaving no trace of the fountain but the iron pipe through which it gushed forth. The man who had charge of it had shut off the water, which is done by means of a stop-cock near the pond. He soon after appeared, walking through the pond, towards the fountain. He wore a pair of high, water-proof boots; and, as there was a series of stone blocks from the border of the pond to the fountain, sunk but a few inches under water, for him to walk upon, he got along very comfortably. Having removed the mouth-piece of the fountain, he screwed on another one, and returned. In a few moments the water burst forth in a new shape. There were a number of small jets arranged in a circle, each jet taking an outward direction. The water formed a graceful curve, as it rounded over towards the lake; and though it was not so lofty and imposing as the other jet, it was in some respects more beautiful.

The fountain at length stopped playing, and Clinton,

after watching a while some boats which boys were sailing on the pond, started off in quest of new sights. He first paid a visit to the great elm tree, near the pond, admired its magnificent proportions, read its brief and imperfect history, as inscribed on a tablet inserted in the iron fence which surrounds it, and mused on the stirring scenes it had looked down upon during the lapse of two hundred years. While thus engaged, he came in contact with a quiet, modest-looking lad, of about his own age, who seemed to be engaged in the same pursuit as himself — sight-seeing. A mutual feeling of lonesomeness, or an intuitive perception of sympathy and congeniality of character, or some other attractive principle, seemed to draw them together, at first sight, and they were soon engaged in conversation. In a short time Clinton had learned from his new acquaintance that his name was Henry; that he came from the country, to get a situation as apprentice, or clerk, but had not yet succeeded; and that he had two older brothers in Boston, with whom he was staying.

"Have you been up to the top of the State House?"

inquired Henry, as Clinton began to look about for some new object of interest.

"No," replied Clinton; "have you?"

"Yes, I went up last week with my brother," said Henry. "Come, let's go up now,—I should like to go again, and I can promise you it's a splendid sight."

"Come on, then,—it's just where I want to go," said Clinton, much pleased that he was to have a companion in making the toilsome ascent.

So they passed on, through the spacious front yard, with its many flights of stone steps; paused a moment to look at the fountains in front of the capitol; paid a visit to the marble statue of Washington, in the alcove opening from Doric Hall; inspected such portions of the building as were open to the public; and then began their long journey to the lantern which surmounts the dome. Up, up, up they went, through the state's great garret, with its interminable stairs, its dreary passages, its venerable dust and cobwebs, and its hot and stifling atmosphere. Now they are in the great dome, whose huge frame-work encompasses them on every side, and fills the mind with something

like awe. And now the light increases — they breathe easier. They have ascended the last of the one hundred and seventy steps; they are two hundred and thirty feet above the level of the sea.

Clinton found that the lantern of the dome, which looked so small from the street, was in reality a room of pretty good size. It was a museum of autographs,— every place where it was possible to write, scratch or cut a name, having been improved by the hundreds of thousands who have visited this favorite resort of strangers. But the inside attractions did not long detain the boys from the magnificent scene without. Clinton's exclamations, as his young companion hurried him from one window to another, were few and brief, but by no means tame or inexpressive. There lay the Common at his feet, looking like a garden-patch of moderate size. The horses and carriages in the streets seemed to be but baby toys, and the people were like ants creeping over the ground. The city spread itself out on every side, with its long lines of brick walls and slated roofs, and its innumerable steeples, towers and cupolas, all compactly wedged together. Outside of this shapeless mass of brick and

stone was a line of water, which nearly surrounded the city. A part of the way it was a narrow ribbon, crossed by numerous bridges, over some of which railway trains were slowly crawling, like caterpillars. Towards the east, however, the shore was fringed with a forest of masts, and the waters stretched outward into the great ocean, and the gleaming of white canvas could be seen, far beyond the green islands that guard the entrance of the harbor. To the landward were to be seen cities and villages, hills, fields and forests, extending for many miles. The boys felt that but two things were wanting, and these were, a good spy-glass, and some one, familiar with the ground, to point out and name the various objects of interest that were spread before them.

After stopping more than half an hour in the lantern, Clinton and Henry commenced the descent. It was nearly noon when they reached the street; and, as Clinton had a long distance to go, and was not familiar with the way, he soon parted with his companion, whose stopping-place lay in another direction, and set his face towards the South End. He trudged along carelessly, until he thought he must be in the neighbor-

hood of the street where his uncle lived. And now he tried to find his bearings, but without success. Nothing looked familiar. He was in a maze. But, as he always preferred to solve his own difficulties, rather than have others help him out of them, he determined that he would make no inquiries so long as there was a chance of finding his way out. Pretty soon he came out on an avenue, which he knew must be Washington Street, from its appearance. Now he felt that he had got a clew that would enable him to find his uncle's house. He walked along for nearly half a mile, but could not find the street for which he was looking. He was beginning to feel some misgivings, when he came in sight of a steeple on which the points of the compass were indicated, and he discovered that instead of going south he was actually heading towards the north. He also recognized the church as the Old South, and he was, consequently, further from his destination than when he left the Common. The sun was so nearly overhead that it did not afford him much aid in directing his course, and he had therefore trusted to instinct, which, in the human kind, is not always a very safe guide.

Of course Clinton faced about and retraced his steps. The dinner hour was at hand; and, wisely concluding that he had experimented enough for one day in the navigation of unknown streets, he inquired his way, and at length reached his uncle's, faint and weary with his forenoon's adventures. His account of his walk from the State House furnished considerable merriment to the family. Whistler declared that he was about to go after the city crier, and tell him to cry, "A child lost, about fourteen years old," &c., &c.; while Mr. Davenport, who always had a story ready, said that Clinton was almost as bad as an old Quaker he once knew, who used to come to Boston occasionally with a load of chairs, and who would sometimes get so bewildered by the hubbub and confusion of the city, as to go up three or four flights of stairs, into the attic, to find his way to the street! He also related the case of a little Irish boy, who landed in Boston from an emigrant ship, and actually became insane from bewilderment. The little fellow, who was but thirteen years old, had no friends here but a brother, who came over a short time before. Confused by the strangeness, and, to his eyes, the magnificence of the

city, which for weeks had been the culminating point of his anticipations, he wandered about, gazing upon the novelties by day, and dreaming of them by night, until he believed himself the inhabitant of a fairy-land, and could not recognize the brother whose bed he shared; "for," said he, "he was dressed so nice, and we used n't to be so at home." Reason soon fled, and for weeks he by turns babbled like a child and raved like a madman. He was taken to the lunatic hospital, and it took several weeks to cure him.

CHAPTER XIV.

SCHOOL TRIALS.

WHISTLER'S first day at school was not a day of unalloyed pleasure. It was not without a severe struggle with his feelings that he met his comrades and teachers, and took the familiar seat he had so long occupied. The exciting scenes of the exhibition day, a few weeks previous, came up vividly in his mind. The general credit with which he passed through the examination, the applause with which his declamation was received, and the praise bestowed upon several drawings and maps executed by his hand, certainly were not of themselves unpleasant recollections. But these happy memories were all embittered by another thought, which he could not drive from his mind. He had left the school, at the close of the last term, expecting to return to it no more. He had presented himself as a candidate for admission to a school of

higher grade, and, to his great surprise and mortification, had been found lacking in some of the necessary qualifications.

This was the severest blow Whistler ever received. He went home and gave himself up to his grief. His vacation was blasted, his visit to Brookdale was spoilt, and, indeed, it almost seemed to him as if his prospects for life were ruined. His mother tried to comfort him, but without much success. When his father came home, at night, he was informed of the result of Whistler's application by Mrs. Davenport. The tea-bell rang, but Whistler did not appear. The servant was then sent to his room to call him, and brought back the reply that he did not want any supper. After tea, Mr. Davenport went up to his chamber, and found him lying upon the bed, with his face buried in a pillow.

"Hallo! what does this mean, Whistler? What's the matter with you?" he inquired.

There was no reply, but a sob.

"Come, speak up! — what ails you?"

"I — could n't get into the — High School," sobbed the poor boy.

"Could n't get into the High School? How happened that? Some partiality or trickery, I suppose; they gave you all the hard questions, and the others the easy ones,— did n't they?"

"No, sir," replied Whistler, somewhat reluctantly; "the questions were printed, and all the candidates had to answer the whole of them in writing."

"Ah, that's the way they manage, is it? Not much chance for foul play there, I should say. Then it seems you could n't answer the questions."

"No, sir,— not all of them."

"Well, whose fault was that?"

"Mine, I suppose;" and the tears started fresh from Whistler's eyes.

"I don't know about that; perhaps no one was to blame for this failure. I have had some doubts, all along, about your success; but I thought it best not to trouble you with them, as I supposed you studied as hard as you ought to. Was I right in my supposition?"

"I believe I've done the best I could," replied Whistler.

"If you can say that with a good conscience," con-

tinued his father, "then I'm sure I shan't blame you, and you ought not to blame yourself; and I think you *can* say it, for it agrees with what your teacher told me. Come, cheer up! and don't think any more about it. It will all come out right, by-and-by. You'll be admitted next year, and you'll be able to keep up with your class better than though you entered now."

These words of encouragement somewhat revived Whistler's feelings, and as nothing more was said in his presence about the matter, by his parents, the tide of disappointment and mortification soon began to subside. His sensitive mind, however, was not wholly relieved, and, intimate as he shortly after became with Clinton, he could not impart to his cousin this unhappy secret. Immediately on his return from his vacation, in accordance with a plan he had formed, he asked his father's permission to enter a private school, instead of returning to the old one; but the reasons he gave were not deemed satisfactory, and the request was not granted. He accordingly reëntered the public school, and, to his great relief, none of his mates laughed at him for coming back, or even alluded to his unsuccessful attempt to get into more select, if not

better company. But he was very glad when the first day of the term was over.

Whistler was a diligent scholar; but, although by no means a dull boy, he did not learn his lessons without much hard labor. Some branches he acquired more easily than others. He had a taste for drawing, and copied maps and even pictures very neatly. He was also a good reader, and in declamation and composition he stood among the best in his class. But in some other branches, particularly spelling and arithmetic, he was rather backward. Nevertheless, he was an industrious scholar, and made fair progress in his studies.

But Whistler was not destined to get through the first day of the new term without some unpleasant experiences. It so happened that in his first recitation, which took place in the afternoon, he "missed" two questions that were put to him. He felt vexed and mortified, and, at his second failure, he could not keep the tears from coming into his eyes. The teacher, as he recorded the demerits, noticed his pupil's emotion, but made no remark. He afterwards

requested Whistler to step to his desk, when school was dismissed.

When the school closed for the day, Whistler proceeded to the place appointed, but not without some unpleasant apprehensions, arising from the imperfect lesson referred to. His fears were dispelled, however, when the teacher, pointing him to a seat, remarked very pleasantly:

"William, you are a pretty good draughtsman, and I've been thinking that perhaps I could get you to do a small job for me."

"I should be happy to," replied Whistler.

"Do you suppose," continued the teacher, taking a couple of pictures from his desk, "that you could make a large copy, in outline, of each of these figures?"

Whistler looked at the engravings a moment, and replied, with some hesitation:

"I could copy them better on the same scale they are there."

"I know you could," continued the teacher; "but that will not answer my purpose. I want them to illustrate some remarks I wish to make to the school,

and they must be large enough to be seen across the schoolroom. I have no time, just now, to copy them myself, and it occurred to me that perhaps you would like to try your hand at it. You will find it somewhat difficult, I suppose; but it will be a good exercise for you, even if you should not succeed very well."

Whistler readily consented to undertake the job, and his teacher furnished him with some large sheets of drawing paper, and gave him such directions in regard to the work as he deemed necessary.

Whistler now hurried home, where he found Clinton, who was so exhausted by his forenoon's tramp that he was glad to remain in the house the rest of the day. With his characteristic dread of idleness, however, he was busy at work with his pocket-knife, whittling out a puzzle for Ettie. It was nearly completed. It consisted of a thin piece of wood, in which three holes were cut,—one square, one round, and one triangular. The holes were all of the same height and width. The puzzle consisted in shaping a piece of wood so that it would stop up either of these holes. To do this, he first made a square block,—a perfect cube. This, of course, stopped up the square hole.

He next rounded this into a cylinder, so that it just fitted the circular hole, while by turning it the right way, it would still answer to fill up the square one. He now sharpened one end of this cylinder, until he had made a perfect triangle, or wedge. This fitted snugly into the remaining hole, while enough of the original form of the block remained to fill the other two holes.

As soon as the puzzle was finished, Whistler went up to his chamber, and began one of the drawings he had engaged to make. His cousin watched his operations with interest, but was unable to render him any assistance. Indeed, this hardly seemed necessary, for the swelling outline grew quite perceptibly under Whistler's pencil; and, although he did not get along without a frequent recourse to the India-rubber, his success was quite equal to his own anticipations. He had drawn maps on both an enlarged and a reduced scale from the original, but he had never before attempted to do either with the human figure, which is far more difficult. He determined to try hard for success, however; and the somewhat doubtful manner in which his teacher spoke of his ability to execute the drawings, seemed rather to stimulate than discourage

him. This was precisely what the teacher intended to do. He knew that the task was a difficult one, though not beyond Whistler's ability. He knew, moreover, that if he had told his pupil it was easy, the latter would scarcely have believed him, and would, perhaps, have been disheartened by the first difficulty; whereas, by taking the other course, the boy's ambition and spirit were more fully aroused, and he was prepared for a strong and patient effort.

The next morning, Clinton having expressed some curiosity to see how a Boston school was managed, he was invited by his cousin to accompany him as a visitor, and he concluded to do so. Reaching the schoolhouse a little before the hour of commencement, they stood in the yard, watching the movements of the merry groups around them, when a large, ill-favored boy cried out:

"There comes that big dunce that's down in the fourth class! Let's poke some fun at him, boys. What's his name?—does any body know? No matter, we'll call him Donkey,—ha! ha! Let's give him that for a nickname! Don't you call him anything else,—will you, boys?"

"Good!—his name shall be Donkey!" said another boy; and several others seconded the motion, while one or two began to shout "Donkey! Hallo, Donkey!" to the unsuspecting butt of their sport.

Whistler, perceiving how matters were tending, now stepped forward, and said:

"Don't you do it, boys! It 's too bad to twit a fellow for what he can't help. That boy has been sick all his lifetime, and could n't go to school, and that 's the reason he 's in the lowest class."

"That 's all gammon!" retorted the boy who proposed the nickname, and whose name was Nathan Clapp. "Bill Davenport has a natural sympathy for dunces,—he does n't want much of being one himself. You know he tried to get into the High School, the other day, and they would n't take him, and he had to come back here again. Let him stick up for Donkey, if he wants to; it 's natural for him to stand up for his own breed!"

"If I 'm a dunce, I should like to know what you are?" exclaimed Whistler, his eye flashing with anger.

"I was n't such a big fool as to try to get into the High School, at any rate!" replied Nathan.

"Don't say anything more to him,— he is n't worth noticing," whispered Clinton in the ear of his cousin; and the latter wisely heeded the advice, and suppressed the angry retort which was trembling upon his lips.

"Can't say anything more, can you? Well, I think you had better shut up!" continued the other boy; and then, turning to the lad in whose behalf Whistler had interfered, and who had now entered the yard, he continued, "Hallo, Donkey! how d' ye do? Got your lesson, hey? Let 's hear you say your a, b, c's. There, Donkey,"— snatching the book from under his arm, and pointing to a line,—"what letter 's that? Don't you know, hey? Can't you speak, you dunce? Come, talk up like a little man! nobody will hurt you. What 's that letter, hey?"

The boy, who was a peaceable and good-natured fellow, was evidently annoyed by his tormentor; but he tried to take his jeers in good part, and joined — not very heartily, it is true — in the laugh that was raised at his expense. Nathan continued to hector him in this way for some minutes, when Whistler, unable longer to repress his indignation, cried out:

"Don't mind what he says, David; I'll warrant you will rank ahead of him in less than six months."

"You say that again, and I'll rap you over the head!" exclaimed Nathan, drawing himself up in a menacing attitude before Whistler.

"There's no need of saying it again; but I'll stick to it," replied Whistler, with firmness.

"Yes, you'd better back out! I knew you daresn't say it again!" continued the young bully.

"If you call that a back-out, you're welcome to all the comfort you can get out of it," calmly replied Whistler.

"If you want to fight, then, come out here!" said Nathan, doubling up his fists.

"No, I thank you," replied Whistler; "I don't believe in fighting."

A boy here whispered to Nathan that the principal was in the schoolhouse, and might overhear him. His voice, which had been loud and defiant, was suddenly modulated to a very low tone, as he added:

"You're a mean, sneaking coward! I'll leave it to all of the boys if you are n't."

This sudden transition from the loud tone of bra-

vado to that of absolute cowardice, was so ludicrous, that there was a general outburst of laughter among the boys, in which Whistler himself heartily joined. They began to challenge each other, in whispers, and declared that they were not afraid of any body, in the softest tones. Nathan quickly disappeared around the corner of the building, but the merriment went on until the signal was given for school to commence.

Clinton went in with his cousin, and remained through the forenoon, an interested spectator of the proceedings. The boys first assembled in a large hall, where a chapter was read from the Bible, and the Lord's Prayer repeated by the whole school. The several divisions then went to their own rooms, each with its own teachers, and remained in separate session, with the exception of the recess, until it was nearly time for the school to be dismissed. All the pupils were then assembled in the large hall, and, after singing two or three verses of a hymn, the principal observed that he wished to say a few words before they separated. He then proceeded, somewhat in the following strain:

"I once knew a boy who was afflicted with a very

painful disease, almost from his infancy. For years he was confined to his bed, and it was supposed that he would never be able to run about like other boys. He had no father, and his mother was poor, and unable to provide him with many of those little comforts that might have made his lot more tolerable. He had a thirst for knowledge, but could not go to school, and, indeed, he could not apply himself to books for any length of time, his eyes were so weak. Still he managed to learn to read, and was quite patient under his sufferings.

"When this boy got to be twelve or thirteen years old, his health improved so much that he was able to walk about. The first desire he expressed was to go to school; and as soon as he was well enough, he was permitted to attend one of the public schools. As he had enjoyed few opportunities of learning, the teacher was obliged to place him in a class of smaller children than himself; but, for all that, he was as intelligent a boy, and as promising a scholar, as you could find in the school, all things considered. But he had not been in the school two days, before one of the large boys, who was not a remarkably good scholar himself began

to make him the butt of his ridicule, calling him a 'dunce' and a 'donkey,' and tried to set the other boys upon him."

At this abrupt pause, most of the scholars looked earnestly, as if impatient for the conclusion of the story; but a few, who recognized the characters introduced, turned their faces towards David and Nathan. After a moment's delay, the teacher resumed his narrative:

"There was another boy in that school, who, though he did not learn his lessons so easily as some children, was nevertheless a diligent and faithful scholar, and behind none of his comrades in intelligence. This boy gallantly interfered in behalf of the new pupil; whereupon the large boy fell upon him, and began to ridicule him because he had been an unsuccessful candidate for another school."

The teacher again paused, and those of the boys who were not in the secret began to wonder at the pointless conclusion of a story that opened so promisingly. He soon continued:

"I'm not going to call any names, — I shan't say, as

David said to Nathan of old, 'Thou art the man!' but—"

"It was Nathan who said that to David," interrupted one of the older boys.

"I believe you are right," continued the teacher, who possibly had not blundered without a purpose; "but, as I was saying, I shall call no names. I will merely say that those three boys are members of this school, and that I have related only what actually happened. And now, I want to put two or three questions to the school, and I wish every boy to answer yes or no. Those of you who think it is fair and honorable to ridicule a boy for his low standing in school, when he has been sick all his days, and had no opportunity to learn, will please to say 'Aye.'"

There was no response.

"Those," continued the teacher, "who think it is mean and dishonorable to do so, will please to say 'Aye.'"

There was a prompt and universal shout of "Aye!"

"Now, those who think it is fair and honorable to ridicule a boy, who studies hard and makes good

progress, because he happened to make a failure once in his life, may say 'Aye.' "

All were silent.

"Those who think it base and mean to do so, will please to say 'Aye.' "

Again there was a prompt and hearty "Aye!"

"Yes, I think there can be but one side to that question," continued the teacher. "A boy who has had no opportunity to study, ought not to be blamed for his ignorance; and one who studies diligently, should not be laughed at if he does not happen to know everything. These are not dunces. The real dunce is the scholar who has the ability and the opportunity to learn, but who will not exercise the one or improve the other, and so remains ignorant. I can't blame you much for laughing at such a boy. He deserves it.

"On the other hand, I do not consider that boy the most promising who learns his lessons in the shortest time. Some of you have only to read over a lesson a few times, and you are ready for recitation; while others are obliged to work hard over it for an hour or more before they can master it. Now, if some one should come in here, and ask me to point out the six

most promising scholars among you, I do not know that I should select one of those lads who commit their lessons to memory with so little effort; but I *do* know that the boy who was laughed at because he failed to get into the High School would be among the six, and the others would be boys who, like him, appear to appreciate the value of knowledge, and make a diligent use of their school privileges.

"I will close," continued the principal, "by reading to you a few facts from a magazine I have in my desk, which go to show that some of the most eminent men of all ages were remarkable only for dulness in their youth. Rev. Dr. Channing, at one period of his youth, says the writer, was considered a dull, plodding character. At nine years of age, one who afterwards became a chief justice in this country, was, during a whole winter, unable to commit to memory the little poem found in one of our school books, commencing,

"'You'd scarce expect one of my age,' &c.

Dr. Scott, the commentator, could not compose a theme when twelve years old; and even at a later age, Dr. Clark, after incredible effort, failed to commit to

memory a poem of a few stanzas only. Wellington, at the military school, was not brilliant. The teachers of Linnæus thought he was fit for nothing but a common mechanic. Sir Isaac Newton ranked very low in school until the age of twelve. When Samuel Wythe, the Dublin schoolmaster, attempted to educate Richard Brinsley Sheridan, he pronounced the boy an 'incorrigible dunce.' The mother of Sheridan fully concurred in this verdict, and declared him the most stupid of her sons. Walter Scott had the credit of having the 'thickest skull in the school,' though Dr. Blair told the teacher that many bright rays of future glory shone through that same 'thick skull.' Milton and Swift were noted for dulness in childhood. The great Isaac Barrow's father used to say that, if it pleased God to take from him any of his children, he hoped it might be Isaac, as the least promising. Goldsmith was dull in his youth, and Shakspeare, Gibbon, Davy and Dryden, do not appear to have exhibited in their childhood even the common elements of future success."

The principal now dismissed the school, and the boys filed out, in military order, at the touch of a bell

CHAPTER XV.

LESSONS IN PHYSIOLOGY.

WHISTLER persevered with the drawings which his teacher had requested him to make; and, though he was frequently obliged to rub out and re-draw his lines, he became so much interested in the work that the idea of being discouraged scarcely occurred to him. He devoted to it all the time he could spare out of school, which was not much, now that he had Clinton to entertain. In two or three days, however, the drawings were completed; and it was but the work of an evening to shade the lines with Indian ink. The next morning the young artist had the satisfaction of handing them to his teacher, and of receiving both his thanks and praise for the neat and faithful manner in which he had executed his commission. After the opening exercises of the school, while all the boys were assembled in the large room, the

principal remarked that he wished to address a few words to the scholars before they separated to their several rooms.

"I have noticed," he said, "a somewhat prevalent fault in the school, which I wish to correct now, at the beginning of the term. Some of you, I perceive, do not know how to sit or stand properly. It is very important that you all should acquire this art, or rather habit. If necessary, you had better neglect your grammar or arithmetic a little, rather than fail of this accomplishment. As you sit or stand now, you will be likely to sit or stand as long as you live. Your bodies are now growing very fast, and they will grow into the shape which you accustom them to. If it is a bad shape, it will be difficult to correct it a few years hence.

"The great thing, in sitting, standing and walking, is *erectness*. Keep the head up, and the body straight. Don't try to hump your backs, nor hang your heads as though they were too heavy for you. There are two great objections to the crooked position. One is, it looks badly; and the other is, it is very injurious to the body. I consider this subject of so much importance that I have procured a few drawings to

illustrate it, which I shall fasten upon the wall, where you can all see them several times every day. The first two that I shall show you were executed by Master William Davenport; and I think you will all admit that they are very creditable to him. This drawing"—and here the principal held up the first design on this page—"shows the wrong standing posture. There are not many of you that cut quite so bad a figure as that when you stand up to read, but some of you resemble it a great deal more than you ought to. Look at it, and see how ungainly it appears! How unnatural it is! Now, just compare it with this boy"—holding up the other design. "This is the right position. It is easy, natural, graceful, and favorable to health. I wish you all to imitate it."

The teacher now wrote "*wrong*" under the first drawing, and "*right*" under the other, and then fastened them upon the wall. He then held up to the school a large drawing, represented in the following engraving, and said

"For this drawing, and the mate to it, which I shall soon show you, I am indebted to Miss Martin." (This lady was one of the assistant teachers.) "It shows the wrong sitting position, and it is a pretty good likeness of the posture which many of you get into when you

are writing and ciphering. Just study that boy's attitude. See his head, hanging down as if it were loaded with lead, — and very likely it is, for he looks like a dunce! See his cramped and hunched chest, and his twisted legs! I will label it '*wrong*,' and fasten it up

here; and as often as you look at it, let it be a warning to you.

"And here, boys," continued the principal, exhibiting the above drawing, "you see the right sitting position. What an improvement it is upon the other

position, even if we think only of the looks! But the effect on the health is far more important than that. I suppose you all know that the spine, or backbone, is intended to support the body and keep it erect. It is one of the most curious contrivances in our bodies. It is composed of twenty-four small bones, between each of which there is a piece of cartilage, or gristle, which we may compare to an India-rubber spring. The whole makes a strong column, and yet it can be bent in any direction, and is so elastic or yielding that it protects the head from jars as completely as the softest cushion could do it. But the proper position of this spinal column is the upright one; and it can never be kept long out of that position without injury. Look at either of those boys who are in the wrong position. The spine, you see, must be very crooked. If they assume that unnatural position often, and remain in it for a long time, there is danger that the cartilages or springs in their backbones will harden where they are compressed, and then they will always be distorted. Besides, there are certain muscles in our trunks that sustain the spine. When we habitually sit or stand in a crooked position, these

muscles are severely taxed, and finally lose their strength, and then we become liable to weakness and disease. Diseases of the spine are very difficult to cure. People are sometimes confined to their beds for ten, twenty, or thirty years by such complaints, before death comes to their relief.

"But the backbone is not the only sufferer from this bad habit. It crowds the lungs, so that they do not have room to work. They become contracted; the chest grows flat and narrow; the stomach and abdomen are pressed together unnaturally; and, after a while, you will be unable to take in air enough to give life and vigor to the blood. Then sores will form in your lungs; the doctors will tell you that you are in consumption, and death will begin to knock at your door. You can easily satisfy yourselves on this point by an experiment or two. Put yourselves into a crooked position, and then speak or read aloud a few minutes. Then do the same thing in an upright position, and see how much easier it is. Or, you may try to take a full breath without raising the shoulders, and then do so giving the shoulders fair play. You will find there is a right way and a wrong way to breathe, and that you

cannot breathe right when you are sitting, standing, or lying in an unnatural position.

"There is one other bad sitting position to which I wish to call your attention. It arises from not keeping the arms on the same level, and is generally caused by sitting at a table or desk that is too high or too low. In resting one elbow, you throw up the shoulder on one side, and depress the other, and the spine is thus made very crooked. You should keep your shoulders as level as possible. Heads up, chest erect and straight, and shoulders square and thrown back — that's the true position. Now, boys, you may go to your rooms, and see if you can put this lesson in practice."

A few days after this, Whistler received another physiological lesson, which made a still deeper impression upon his mind. It happened in this wise. Ettie had a beautiful kitten, to which she was very much attached. It was as white as snow, with the exception of its feet, and a black spot under its neck. Its fur was very fine, soft and clean. One afternoon, on returning from school, Whistler found the kitten asleep in a little apartment which was devoted to Ettie's

especial use as a play-room. His sister's playthings were scattered over the floor, and among them was a small box in which she kept many of her valuables, and which she called her work-box. It was made of mahogany, and the top slid on in a groove. Thoughtless of everything but fun, Whistler deposited kitty in the box, and closed the top, chuckling to himself as he imagined how Ettie would jump when she returned to her sports and opened pussy's prison.

In the evening Ettie searched the house from cellar to attic for her kitten, but it did not come to her call. Besides herself, no one was at home but her father and the domestic, the rest of the family having gone to hear the band play upon the Common, this being one of the evenings in which music was provided for the public at the city's expense. Ettie, however, would give neither her father nor the domestic any peace until they had joined her in the search; and when, after thoroughly exploring the premises, outdoors and in, without avail, they told her she must go to bed without seeing the kitty, she did not yield to their wishes without some tears, although assured that the

little stray-away would doubtless come home in the morning.

The next morning Ettie was among the first in the family to arise, and she anxiously resumed her search for the lost kitten. Whistler heard her from his chamber, and his intended joke then flashed upon his mind, almost for the first time since he shut the box upon the kitten. Hurriedly dressing himself, he went down to Ettie's play-room, and found the box just as he left it. Drawing off the cover, there lay the missing kitten, cold and stiff in death. It had evidently died of suffocation, or want of air. The joints of the box were fitted together with glue, and the top slid on very snugly, so that it was nearly air-tight.

Whistler felt sad enough at this unexpected issue of an act of playfulness. His sadness was greatly increased by the consciousness which flashed upon him that he was not altogether innocent in the matter. But, at the same moment, another thought flashed upon his mind, and that was, that the fate of the kitten need never be known to any one else. Fortunately he had said nothing about shutting her up, and it would now be very easy to dispose of her remains in a private

manner. He was not sure but that it would be a kindness to Ettie to leave her in the dark as to the sad and untimely fate of her four-footed playmate. Then he thought of an admonition which his father had often urged upon him from early childhood. It was this: "When you accidentally do any mischief, always promptly confess it, for I can forgive your carelessness much more easily than your attempt at concealment." He had been too faithfully trained to this excellent rule to disregard it now; and he made up his mind very quickly what course to pursue. Shutting up the box, and placing it where Ettie could not get at it, he went to his father's chamber door, and knocked. Mr. Davenport was dressing himself, and admitted him.

"Father, I have done some mischief, but I didn't mean to," said Whistler, with some hesitation.

"What now? — some more of your heedlessness?" inquired his father.

Whistler related his unhappy attempt at a joke, and its sad sequel.

"Well," said his father, when he had finished his confession, "that was very bright in you, I must confess. Didn't you know that cats have lungs, and can't

live without air? What has become of all the physiology you have learned at school and at home? Could n't you put enough of it in practice to save that poor kitten's life?"

Whistler was silent. He was almost as much astonished as his father at his own thoughtlessness, for his parents had taken unusual pains to impress upon his mind some of the great laws of health, foremost among which was the necessity of an abundant supply of pure air. He could explain the uses of the lungs; he could name the gases of which air is composed; he knew that a pair of human lungs need a hogshead of fresh air every hour, to sustain health; and yet it did not occur to him that a kitten would suffer, and perhaps die, if shut up in a box but little larger than itself, and nearly air-tight.

"Well, it can't be helped now; but be more careful hereafter," added Mr. Davenport.

"Had I better tell Sissy the kitten is dead, or would you say nothing about it to her?" inquired Whistler.

"Yes, go at once and tell her about it, and don't keep her in suspense any longer," replied his father.

Whistler promptly obeyed, breaking the news as

gently as possible to his little sister; but, in spite of his precautions, she gave vent to a flood of tears, and refused to be comforted. Poor kitty had one sincere mourner.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PRESTON FAMILY.

"MOTHER, may I go over to Ralph Preston's, this evening, with Clinton?" asked Whistler, one day, about the middle of September. "Oscar has got home, and his cousin Marcus has come with him. I've seen them both. We are going to take Clinton and Oscar by surprise. Oscar does n't know that Clinton is in town, and Clinton does n't know that Oscar is. There 'll be quite a scene, I guess, when they come together; you know they used to be pretty intimate, when Oscar lived down to Brookdale."

Mrs. Davenport readily granted the desired permission; for, although it was a rule of the house that the children should never be absent from home after dark without the consent of one of their parents, the rule was intended merely to shield them from the moral

dangers to which the young are exposed in the streets of towns after nightfall, and not to debar them from any proper and innocent amusement.

Whistler and Ralph attended the same school, and, although there was a difference of two or three years between their ages,—Ralph being the younger,—they were intimate friends. There were many excellent traits in Ralph's character. Whistler was also on terms of friendship with the other members of the family — Alice, Ella and George. Alice was a young lady of seventeen. Ella has already been introduced to the reader. George, the youngest, was about nine years old. With Oscar, who was now half way between fifteen and sixteen, Whistler had never been on very good terms. Until within a little more than a year, they had been classmates in school; but the character of Oscar, at that time, was not such as Whistler could admire; and, on the other hand, Oscar seemed, for some reason known best to himself, to take a dislike to Whistler, which more than once manifested itself in blows. For all this, however, Whistler now cherished no feeling of resentment towards his old enemy. On the contrary, the shame and suffering

which Oscar had brought upon himself, and the desire and determination he had expressed to reform, warmly enlisted Whistler's sympathies in his behalf.

Marcus Page, Oscar's cousin, who had come to Boston with him, was about eighteen years old, and lived in the small town of Highburg, in Vermont. His mother had agreed to take Oscar into her family, where he would be under good influences, and secure from the evil associations and temptations of the city; and his release from the State Reform School was conditioned upon this arrangement. Marcus was to spend a few day in Boston, and then to return to his home, with Oscar.

When Mr. Davenport came home to tea that evening, he brought a letter for Clinton. It was from his mother, and was the first intelligence he had received from home since his departure. It contained several items of intelligence which, to him, were of considerable importance. Dick Sneider, the supposed incendiary, had at length been arrested, and after a preliminary examination, had been committed to jail, to await a trial by jury. Clinton had been summoned as a witness against him; but, as the trial could not

take place for several weeks, he would have an opportunity to finish his visit before returning. Nor was Dick the only rogue that had been caught since Clinton left home. The letter stated that some creature entered Mr. Preston's barn, one night, and killed four geese. A trap was set the next night, and the following morning it held securely by the paw of the left fore foot a wild-cat that stood seventeen inches high, measured three feet in length, and weighed thirty-three pounds. He was alive, and not in a very amiable mood, when discovered, but was despatched by two or three blows with a heavy stick. His skin had been preserved. "It is the opinion of the folks here," continued the letter, "that this was the identical rascal that made such havoc with your fowls, just before you left home; but we shall probably never know for a certainty whether this was so or not. When we discover a rogue, we are apt to lay upon him not only his own sins, but many others for which we can find no owner."

If Mrs. Davenport entertained any doubt as to the guilt of the wild-cat in the chicken affair, Clinton did not. It was as plain to him as day that the feline

monster was the real culprit. He had suspected as much from the first, against his father's doubts and ridicule; and now that the presence of such a creature had been demonstrated, he wanted no further proof. There was somewhat of a chasm between the two links of the argument, it is true; but although the reasoning would hardly be sufficient to hang a man, Clinton deemed it amply conclusive to condemn a wild-cat. He exulted quite as much over the conquest of this midnight marauder, as he did over the capture of the other and greater rogue mentioned in the letter.

After tea, Clinton went over to Mr. Preston's house with his cousin. The "surprise," when Oscar and Clinton met, was quite as great, on both sides, as had been anticipated. They were right glad to see each other face to face once more; and, although Oscar at first seemed to feel some restraint, the cordial manner with which his old comrades received him, put him at his ease again. From regard to his feelings, no allusion was made to his past career; but future plans and hopes were discussed quite freely.

"How do you think you shall like living on a farm?" inquired Clinton, addressing Oscar.

"O, I've made up my mind to like it, whether or no," was the reply.

"If you stick to that, you will be contented enough," said Marcus.

"You won't have to work very hard this winter, I suppose," added Clinton, who remembered that industry was not one of Oscar's virtues, when he knew him in Brookdale.

"No, — I 'm going to the academy till next spring, if not longer," replied Oscar.

"Are you?" inquired Clinton.

"And I should n't wonder if I had Cousin Marcus for a teacher, too," added Oscar.

"Why, that would be complete!" said Whistler.

"Yes; the trustees want him to be an assistant teacher this winter, but he has n't given them any answer yet," continued Oscar.

"I should admire to have you for a teacher, I know I should," said Ella. "I should expect you would show me lots of favors."

"Perhaps I should," replied Marcus; "but possibly they might not be just such favors as you would like. We had a teacher in our district school, once, who had

his wife's brother for one of his pupils. He was a large boy, and quite a good sort of a fellow, too; but he got more whippings than any two boys in the school. I suppose his brother-in-law thought he must show him some favors."

"But you would n't serve *me* in that way?" said Ella.

"I should hope not, — nor Oscar, either," replied Marcus; "but I must tell you what I told Ronald. He was quite tickled with the idea of my being teacher; but I told him that if I showed him any partiality, it would only be in looking after him a little sharper than I did after the other scholars."

"Then Ronald is going to the academy this winter?" inquired Mrs. Preston.

"Yes, ma'am; he is to commence with the next term," replied Marcus.

"Ronald, — that 's a queer name! — who is he?" inquired Whistler.

"He 's a little fellow that has lived with us several years," replied Marcus. "He is a French Canadian by birth; but his parents are dead, and mother took him out of pity, and has brought him up, so far."

"He thinks a great deal of you, does n't he?" inquired Ralph.

"He appears to," replied Marcus.

"He certainly ought to; your cousin Marcus has been almost a father to him," said Mrs. Preston. "He takes nearly the whole care of him, and has made him what he is; and I suppose Ronald feels towards him very much as he would towards a father."

"You give me more credit than belongs to me," interposed Marcus. "If it had n't been for mother and Aunt Fanny, I could n't have done anything with him. He was the queerest little fellow you ever saw when he first came to us. He was full of all sorts of pranks, and was as wild and untrained as an Indian child."

"Did he talk English?" inquired George.

"Yes, after his fashion," replied Marcus. "His parents spoke broken English, but French was their natural tongue."

"Does he speak French, too?" inquired Clinton.

"No, he has lost that," replied Marcus. "When I began to study French at school, I thought he might be of some help to me; but I soon found that his

patois, as they call it, was about as bad as the English of a raw Irishman. So we thought he might as well let it go."

"Does he speak English well, now?" asked Whistler.

"O, yes, — very well," said Marcus.

"What did you think of him, mother? You saw him this summer, did n't you?" inquired Oscar.

"Yes, I saw him, and liked him very well," replied Mrs. Preston. "He is a bright, intelligent, wide-awake boy, but a little roguish, I should say."

"But, mother, he is a good-hearted and well-meaning boy," said Alice, who also had visited Highburg that summer.

"I have no doubt of it," added Mrs. Preston; "but for all that he is a little mischievous. I have laughed a good many times over one scrape he got himself into while we were there. There are two buildings on the farm that stand very near together, but do not touch. There is just about enough space between them for a cat to walk through. Well, Ronald took it into his head, one day, to crawl through that narrow space. So he squeezed himself in, and pretty soon we heard a

great outcry in that direction. We all ran out to see what had happened, and there we found the young rogue, wedged in so closely between the two buildings that he could n't move an inch, and almost frightened out of his wits. Marcus got ropes and pries, and we worked over him about an hour before we got him out; and then he had to leave a good part of his clothing behind him. I shall never forget how cheap he looked when he came out of that place — his jacket in tatters, his clothes covered with mould and dirt, and his face as red as a beet."

"He has a faculty for getting himself into such scrapes," said Marcus. "Last spring I had some business at Montpelier, and I took him with me. The man I wanted to see was an officer of some kind, — a sheriff, I believe. He was n't in when I called at his place of business, and so I took a newspaper, and sat down to wait. I did n't notice what Ronald was about; but after a few minutes he came to me, with one of his droll looks, and carrying his hands in a singular manner. He was handcuffed. I at first thought it was a good joke, and laughed at it; but I soon found it was a sorry joke to him, for he could n't get the handcuffs

off. They had spring locks, and fastened themselves, but could not be opened without a key. Though they were too large for his wrists, I found I could not slip them off without endangering his hands. Pretty soon a man came in, and he told me that Ronald would have to wear the handcuffs until I could find their owner, if it was for a week, as no key would unlock them but the one that was made for them. This rather put a damper on Ronald; but, fortunately, the man came in after a little while. Then I thought I would carry the joke a little farther; so I pointed to Ronald, and told him I had got a prisoner for him. He wanted to know what he had done, and I told him he had put his hands where he ought not to. 'Ah, that's bad! — that's bad!' said he; 'how much did he steal?'—'I did n't steal anything,' said Ronald; 'but I saw these things, and I thought I'd try them on, and now I can't get them off.' The man saw through the joke, then, and he got the key and took off the handcuffs."

"Ronald is n't the first boy who has handcuffed himself," said Mr. Preston, looking up from one of several letters which he had been opening and reading during the preceding conversation. "Here's a boy,

now, who has put himself into worse handcuffs than Ronald's, and, what is more, he doesn't know it; but any body else can see it plainly enough."

"Who is he, father?—what has he done?" inquired Ralph.

"He is a boy who wants a situation in my store," replied Mr. Preston. "I put an advertisement in the papers for a boy, and these letters are all answers to it. Here is the advertisement; you may read it aloud, Ralph, and then those who wish may examine this reply to it."

Ralph then read as follows:

"WANTED, in a W. I. Goods Store, an active, intelligent boy, about fourteen years old, who writes a fair hand, is quick at figures, and whose parents reside in the city. Address, in handwriting of applicant, 'W. I. G.,' at this office."

The letter to which Mr. Preston alluded was then handed around, and read by all present, eliciting many amusing comments. The handwriting was cramped, awkward, and in some parts scarcely legible; the spelling was quite original; the sentences were run into each other with an utter contempt for marks of punctuation; capital letters were withheld and dis-

pensed according to a system not laid down in any of the books; and the general structure of the composition indicated an entire ignorance of all rules and laws of established usage. It read as follows:

"FALL RIVER, sep 14

"Honered sir—i see by the Boston dayly papers printed in Boston that you want a boy if you do i think i might answer perhaps i am fifteen old smart and strong have a good education have ciphered through adams arithmetic once and took a meddle at the last righting school——Perhaps you wont Think so by my righting as i have got a very bad pen i have had some experience in my unkles grocery and should staid there if was not so verry dull i think i should like Boston a great deal Better.

"As for sallary i think 50 ayear besides my board and cloathes about right the first year i can come as soon as you want please write to obedient Servant JOHN MORROW."

"Sure enough," said Mrs. Preston, "that boy has put on handcuffs,—handcuffs of ignorance! If he tells the truth, he has had some opportunities of getting an education; but it is very plain that he did not profit by them. He has put the handcuffs on, and he will have to wear them, now."

The children insisted upon seeing the letters of the other applicants, and they were accordingly handed around, read, and criticised, affording much amusement to the company. None of them were quite so faulty as John Morrow's, though several of them did not do much credit to the writers. Two or three, however, were very well expressed, and neatly written. One of the best read as follows:

"BOSTON, Sept. 15, 185–.

"DEAR SIR: I read your advertisement for a boy, and think I might answer your purpose. I was fourteen years old last June, and have just left school, and come to Boston to earn my living. My parents live in Dracut; but I have two grown-up brothers in Boston, with whom I live, and who will look after me. I have the recommendation of my school teacher, and several other gentlemen, which I will show you if you wish. If you will try me, I will endeavor to give satisfaction. You can find me at No. —, —— Street.

"Yours, respectfully,

"HENRY E. HOYT."

"Why, Mr. Preston, I know that boy!" exclaimed Clinton, as soon as his eye rested upon the above signature; "and I think he's a good boy, too."

"Ah!" said Mr. Preston; "what do you know about him?"

"I don't really *know* much about him," replied Clinton; "but I liked his appearance. I got acquainted with him on the Common, a week or two ago, and I went up to the top of the State House with him. He told me he came from Dracut, and lived with his brothers, and was trying to get a place. This must be the same boy."

"Is that all you know about him?" inquired Mr. Preston, with a smile.

"Yes, sir," replied Clinton; "but he *looked* like a good boy, and his letter reads well, too. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Preston; "and, as you were so well impressed by him, I think I will see him, at any rate, before I engage a boy."

"And if he gets the place, he must thank you for it, Clinton," said Whistler.

"No, it will be owing to his writing such a good letter," replied Clinton. "If he had made such a bungling piece of work as that other boy did, I would n't have owned him as an acquaintance."

Thus the evening passed away in pleasant conversation, and all seemed sorry when the stroke of the clock announced the hour at which Whistler and his cousin were obliged to leave.

CHAPTER XVII.

A WATER EXCURSION.

THE next Saturday Whistler came home from school in great haste, at noon, and informed his mother that several of his young associates were going to get a sailboat and take a cruise in the harbor, immediately after dinner, and had invited him to go with them. Each boy was to pay a small sum for the use of the boat, the amount of which assessment would depend upon the number in the party. Whistler was quite anxious to go with them, and he knew Clinton would be, also, although he had not been able to find him since school was dismissed. The day was calm and pleasant, the boys who were going were of good character, several of them understood managing a boat, and they could not help having a good time. Such was Whistler's story.

But his mother was not at all pleased with the project. She did not consider it safe for a party of such boys to venture upon the water, without a man capable of managing the boat. Whistler argued and pleaded, but could not change her mind. She finally told him that she should not give her consent to his going, and wished he would abandon the idea; but added that, if he was very anxious to go, he might ask his father's permission, and if it was granted she should say nothing more about it.

As Mr. Davenport generally dined down town when business was pressing, Whistler started at once for his office. He found his father deeply engaged with several gentlemen, and some time elapsed before he could get even a look from him. After a while the busy lawyer stepped aside, and, telling his son to "speak quick," listened to his request. He asked a question or two about the boys who were going, and, taking a handful of change from his pocket, gave Whistler enough to pay for himself and Clinton, and told him they might go with the party.

Whistler hastened home, and informed his mother of his success; but she kept her promise, and said

nothing about the matter, although he tried hard to draw from her some modification of her judgment. Soon one of the boys who was getting up the party called to see whether Whistler was going. For a moment he was in doubt what reply to make. He could not consult Clinton, who had not yet returned. He wanted to go very much, but he did not wish to set at defiance the known wishes of his mother. He soon, however, made up his mind what to do. After a short but severe struggle in his mind, he told the boy that he should not go. When Clinton came in, and was informed of the affair, he appeared to be satisfied with Whistler's decision, though it was no less a disappointment to him than to his cousin.

"Well, boys, you have got back in good season from your excursion," said Mr. Davenport, when he came home from his business that afternoon.

"We did n't go," replied Whistler.

"Did n't go! — how happened that?" inquired his father.

"Mother did n't want us to go, and so I thought we had better give it up," replied Whistler.

"That was a good reason, — a very good reason,"

said his father. "On the whole, I think your mother was about right. It is n't safe for a lot of boys to go on the water alone; and I was sorry, five minutes afterwards, that I consented to your going."

There the matter dropped; but the regard Whistler had manifested for his mother's wishes was not forgotten by either of his parents. It was talked over when they were alone, and it was determined to reward him in some way for his self-denying decision. The next Monday his mother had the pleasure of informing him that the whole family were going to sail in the harbor the following Wednesday, which was his birthday. Mr. Davenport had chartered a fine yacht * for the occasion. Whistler had liberty to invite the Preston children, and also Marcus, to go with them; and several other invitations were likewise to be extended.

Whistler lost no time in spreading the news of this arrangement among those who were interested. He learned that Marcus and Oscar had intended to start for Vermont on the day of the proposed excursion;

* Pronounced yot.

but they were easily persuaded to postpone their journey for one day, for the sake of joining the party. Ella and her brothers, Ralph and George, only awaited their father's consent to give the invitation a cordial acceptance. Indeed, so impatient were they, that Ralph proceeded at once to his father's store, and obtained the desired permission. Clinton and Whistler went with him, and the first-named had the gratification of meeting his chance acquaintance, Henry Hoyt, who had that morning entered upon the service of Mr. Preston. Henry was not a little surprised to find that there was so close a connection between his courtesy to a fellow stranger and the success of his application for a situation.

Wednesday came, and Whistler was fourteen years old. The accustomed birthday present from his parents, which had never failed him within his recollection, was found upon his table when he awoke. It was a plain but highly-polished rosewood box, filled with implements and materials for drawing. Everything that a young artist could desire in the pursuit of his favorite study was here to be found, neatly secured in its own place. Whistler was delighted with the

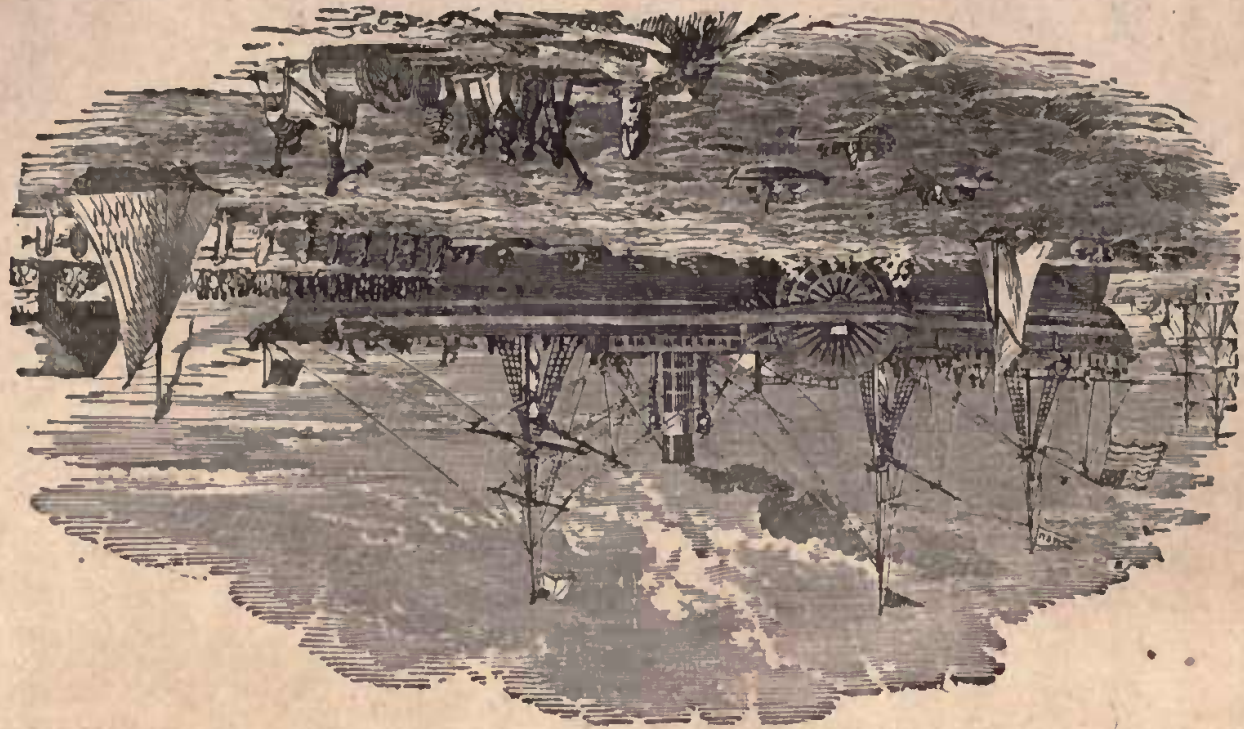
gift, and assured his parents that they could not possibly have selected a present that would have pleased him better.

After breakfast, active preparations were made for the excursion; and promptly, at the hour appointed, all of the company invited were assembled upon the wharf where the yacht lay. The "Echo," as she was called, was rigged as a sloop, — that is, she had but one mast, and a bowsprit. She was of about twenty-five tons burden, and looked quite small by the side of the huge ships of ten or twelve hundred tons which surrounded and overshadowed her. While these leviathans towered high above the wharves, the modest Echo sat so low in the water that the party had to go down a ladder to reach her deck. She was a neat, trim, and graceful craft, however, and everything about her was scrupulously clean. A blue pennant was flying from her masthead.

The party seated themselves in the stern of the yacht, where they found very good accommodations, while the skipper and his two men — who constituted the whole crew — took their positions forward. Having cast off their lines, they hoisted the jib, and began

to push out from the wharf. Both the wind and tide were contrary, and it required some nautical skill to get out into the stream. Once clear from the wharf, the first thing they did was to run into a small row-boat, and the next was to thump against the side of a large steamboat which lay at the opposite wharf. No harm was done, however; and, after a few unintelligible orders from the skipper, — who had now taken his post at the helm, — they swung clear of every obstacle, the mainsail was hoisted, and they were under way.

The wind being in an easterly direction, the yacht was obliged to "beat out," as it is called; that is, instead of taking a direct course for the outer harbor, she had to sail in zigzag lines, approaching very gradually towards the point to which she was bound. The first "tack," as the sailors term the course of a ship when beating against the wind, took the Echo close to the shore of East Boston. A large steamship, just arrived from Europe, was entering her berth; and, at the request of several of the party, the captain of the yacht sailed up to within a few yards of her, giving all on board a fine opportunity to inspect the huge and



stately leviathan. What an impression of strength and beauty, of gigantic power and indescribable grace, did they derive, as they gazed up from their frail and tiny craft upon the towering walls of this ocean monster! A crowd was assembled upon the wharf, awaiting the landing of the passengers; and several small boats were hovering around, drawn thither, probably, like the Echo, by curiosity. Altogether, it was a very lively and interesting scene. After sailing slowly by the steamship, the Echo was put upon a new tack, heading towards the opposite side of the stream. In taking these tacks from one side to the other, considerable skill was required to steer clear of the numerous vessels of all sorts that were lying in the course of the yacht.

"Beautiful!" "charming!" "splendid!" were exclamations that frequently arose above the general buzz of conversation, in the stern, as the Echo glided smoothly over the waters. Nor were these extravagant terms; for a sail down Boston harbor, on such a day, and in such a craft, is one of the pleasantest excursions that can be imagined. But, while some of the party were enjoying the beautiful views that

presented themselves, others, and especially the boys, were engaged in watching their boat, and in examining its various appointments.

"What queer seats these are! What is the object of making them in that shape?" inquired Clinton, as he examined a stool that was shaped somewhat like an hour-glass, and was made of tin, and painted, with the name of the yacht inscribed upon it.

"That is a life-preserver, as well as a stool," replied Whistler. "If any one should fall overboard, they would throw him one of these stools, and that would keep his head above water till they could get him out."

"Now, look out for your heads, ladies, if you please!" said the captain, as he was about to swing the boom around to the other side of the boat, for the purpose of changing the tack.

"No matter about the gentlemen's heads!" said Whistler; and, suiting the action to the word, he sat upright until the boom came upon him, and then, dodging it a little too late, it took his hat from his head, and, but for a quick movement on his part, would have sent it whirling into the water.

"If you had sat still a moment longer, Willie, we might have had an opportunity to experiment with one of these life-preservers," said Marcus.

"I know it," replied Whistler; "and I'm not going to stay here and be knocked round in this way! Come, boys, let's go down into the cabin."

Several of the party accepted Whistler's invitation. The cabin occupied the middle part of the boat. Of course it was a rather small apartment; but, for all that, there was a good deal in it. Every available inch of room was fully improved. It was only about five feet high, — not high enough to allow Marcus and Oscar to stand up straight. A permanent table ran nearly the whole length, with leaves that dropped down when not in use. There was a raised edge around the table, to keep the dishes from sliding off when the sea is rough. The mast came up through the table, but was handsomely paneled, and, but for its decided slant, might have passed for a pillar. A castor and a basket full of tumblers were hanging over the table, and benches were placed on each side of it.

The cabin was also fitted up with berths, very much like the one which Whistler occupied on board the

steamboat, on his journey to Brookdale. There were four of them on each side, and they were furnished with neat white bedding. Under each berth there was a locker, for stowing away clothing, &c. The cabin was lighted by the doorway, and by a skylight, which was raised a little above the level of the deck.

Forward of the cabin, and connected with it by a door, was the cook-room. It contained a cooking-stove, with a bright brass railing around the top, to keep. things in their places. The funnel went up through the deck. A man was kindling a fire, and as the room seemed too small to hold two at once, the boys did not go in.

Returning to the deck, the boys found that they were off Fort Independence (Castle Island), distant a little more than two miles from the city. The view was now very fine. The numerous islands of the harbor began to appear, and glimpses of the ocean were obtained between their green and sunny slopes. Several vessels, availing themselves of a favorable wind, were entering the port in gallant style. Among them was a noble ship, returning from a distant voyage. But few of her sails were spread, yet she

dashed through the waters with such grace and speed that the boys could not refrain from giving her three cheers as she passed their boat. The compliment was promptly returned by the sailors.

The next object of interest that the Echo passed was the Long Island Light, distant about five miles from the city. The air was now growing uncomfortably cool, and the captain brought up from the cabin a quantity of shawls, hoods, old hats, &c., which he said he kept expressly for company. They were gratefully accepted; and the sudden outward transformation which the party underwent, furnished no little food for merriment.

At noon, the captain invited the company to take something to eat. On descending to the cabin, they found the table spread with a variety of eatables. There were boiled ham, and tongue, and eggs; pies, crackers, and bread; sardines, olives, and pickles; hot coffee and tea, and genuine Cochituate, fresh, not from the pipes, but from an ice-tank. There is nothing like snuffing the sea air to give one an appetite; and the plain, substantial fare disappeared very rapidly from the table. Before the meal was concluded, however, Ella

and one or two others left the table rather suddenly. Oscar, who was more of a sailor than any of the rest, rallied his sister on her prompt acknowledgment of the claims of Neptune; but she protested that she did not feel at all sick. Very possibly she would, though, had she remained below a little longer. The fresh air revived her, and the slight nausea she began to experience in the cabin soon passed away.

The Echo was now seven miles out, but had, in reality, sailed twenty-five miles in making that distance. The broad ocean was in full view, studded with sails, and the sea was much rougher than it was before dinner. A large steamship was soon discovered, threading its way out from among the islands. It was watched with much interest by all, and as it passed near them they had a good view of it. It proved to be a screw steamer; that is, instead of paddle-wheels on the sides, the power was applied to a propeller under the ship's keel. She presented a noble and substantial appearance as she sailed down the harbor, impelled by an invisible power, and seemed strong enough to withstand any shock that she might encounter on the ocean. A clipper ship, outward bound, also

passed near them, having most of her canvas spread, and was an object of scarcely less interest than the steamship.

The yacht was now approaching George's Island, where the party had decided to land. This island, which is the key to the outer harbor, commanding the open sea, belongs to the United States, and contains one of the most extensive and costly fortifications in the country. The fortress, however, is in an unfinished state. As they drew near to the island, they found that it was surrounded by a sea wall, composed of immense blocks of granite. This is necessary, to prevent the washing away of the island in the furious storms which sweep over the coast. The winds and waves have made sad inroads upon the islands in the harbor, even within the memory of many now living. It is said that the breakers now roll where large herds of cattle were pastured seventy-five years ago.

Having landed at the wharf, the party walked up towards the fort, which is named after General Warren. Immense walls of granite, of the purest quality and smoothest finish, towered above them. On the

top of the walls were banks of earth, neatly sodded. The road led them to a substantial stone gateway, which was open, and they accordingly entered it. They now found themselves in a narrow passageway, with high walls on either side. There were many long and narrow openings in the walls, through which muskets could be fired, should an enemy succeed in landing, and try to take the fort. An invading force, hemmed in by the walls, would receive a dreadful raking from these loopholes before they could get inside of the fortress.

On reaching the interior of the fortification they found themselves in a large area. The captain of the yacht, who acted as their guide, informed them that twelve acres were inclosed, and three more were occupied by the walls. There were several workshops and a large dwelling-house within the enclosure. As they were examining the fine specimens of masonry which the walls presented, a gentleman wearing the uniform of an army officer came up to them, and politely offered to show them over the fortress. His offer was gratefully accepted.

"We will first ascend the parapets, if you please,"

said the officer, leading the way towards a long flight of stone steps.

"Work seems to be suspended here," remarked Mr. Davenport, as they passed several ox-carts that were covered with rust.

"Yes, sir," replied the officer; "the appropriation is exhausted, and nothing has been done here for several months."

"This place will have cost Uncle Sam some money, when it is finished," continued Mr. Davenport.

"Something over a million of dollars, probably," replied the officer.

"Well, perhaps it will be worth that money, in case of war," said Mr. Davenport; "but it strikes me that fighting is a pretty costly business."

"O, what a splendid view!" was the general exclamation, as the party reached the top of the parapet.

"You perceive that the whole harbor is completely commanded by the fort," continued the officer. "Here, within a pistol shot, is the main channel, through which all large vessels must pass as they enter or leave the harbor. If an enemy's ship were to try to pass here, after the fort is mounted, we could bring from a hun-

dred to a hundred and fifty guns to bear upon her, at the same time, at any point."

They continued their walk upon the top of the parapet for some minutes, enjoying the fine view to be had on every side. It is here that the heaviest guns are designed to be placed, in the open air. Large square stones are set for the guns to rest upon, and semi-circular ones for the gun carriages to traverse. There is also a wall, behind which the men can hide.

On descending from the parapet, the officer unlocked a door, and, through a rather gloomy passage, led them into the interior of the fortress. Here they wandered for a quarter of an hour through a labyrinth of massive masonry, gazing with wonder at the solid walls, the arched stone roof, and the long series of rooms connected by doors. They found but one gun mounted, but that served to illustrate the principle on which the cannon are intended to work. The port-holes are so shaped that the guns are allowed a wide range, and yet there is little room for shot to enter from without. They have an inner and an outer flare, being narrowest in the centre of the wall. That part of the carriage farthest from the muzzle has a sideway

motion, so that the gun may be readily pointed in any direction required. The fort will mount about three hundred guns.

Besides the gun-rooms there are a large number of other apartments, to which the party were introduced. Some of them are intended for ante-rooms, into which the soldiers may retire. They have fireplaces, and will doubtless wear an air of comfort and cheerfulness when finished and furnished. Other apartments, designed as parlors for the officers, are still more expensively finished. There are also kitchens, sleeping-rooms, magazines, cells for prisoners, &c.

"This must be one of the finest fortresses in the country," said Mr. Davenport, as they came out once more into the open air.

"Yes, sir, it is," replied the officer. "It is impregnable from sea; but, if it could be attacked by land, it might be blown to pieces, after a while. No masonry is solid enough to be proof against efficient land batteries, — that was proved at Sebastopol."

"Well," said Mr. Davenport, "the worst wish I have for Uncle Sam is, that he may never have occasion to use this immense fortress."

"I heartily join you in that wish, in spite of my profession," replied the officer; and he then politely took leave of them.

Warmly thanking their guide for his attentions, the party hastened to their boat, and were soon on their way back. The wind had died away, and their progress homeward was not very rapid. The skipper evidently felt somewhat concerned for the credit of his craft. He declared that she was a swift sailer; but nothing, he said, could sail without wind, or in the face of a stiff breeze. His equanimity seemed to be still more seriously disturbed when a large schooner, with a great spread of canvas, came up behind him, and began to gain upon the Echo. He kept a sharp eye upon the intruder, as he evidently regarded her; and when she passed the Echo to the windward, instead of the leeward, he could no longer restrain his disgust, but remarked to Mr. Davenport, with some warmth:

"A fellow that 'll do that is no gentleman!"

A puzzled look from several of the ladies, who did not understand the nature of the offence, recalled him to a sense of his dignity, and he was soon as gallant and as good-natured as usual. In justice to him, it

should be remarked that the schooner, by going to the windward, had taken the wind out of his sails, which is not considered a very courteous act among sailors.

The party reached the wharf in safety, and all declared that they never spent a pleasanter day than in their trip down the harbor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LAST DAY OF THE VISIT.

CLINTON remained in Boston about six weeks, or until the middle of October. During that time he made himself pretty well acquainted with the city, and visited all the objects of interest in and around it. At length the last day of his sight-seeing was over, his valise was packed, and he sat down with his uncle's family for the last time. It was a cool evening, and a fire in the grate sent out a cheerful warmth. His uncle sat near the table, reading the evening newspaper. His aunt was busy with her needle. Whistler was conning his next morning's lesson, and Ettie was showing to kitty the pictures in one of her books, while Bouncer was asleep upon the mat. Clinton alone sat idle; but he was not wholly unoccupied. His thoughts were busy, and a feeling of sadness was

stealing over him as the hour of his departure drew near.

After a while Mr. Davenport laid his paper aside, and Whistler took it up. He glanced over one of its columns with some care, and then said:

"No news from the Susan yet; you will have to go home without Jerry, Clinton."

The Susan was the brig in which Jerry Preston sailed. She was now expected at Boston; and the boys had looked daily in the newspapers for the intelligence of her arrival. Clinton had some hope that Jerry would get back in season to return with him to Brookdale; but in this he was disappointed.

"Well, Whistler, what have you learned to-day?" inquired Mr. Davenport,— a question which he frequently addressed to his son, in the evening.

"Let me see," replied Whistler, slowly. "O, I've learned which are the three hardest words to pronounce in the English language."

"Ah! what are they?" inquired his father.

"They are, '*I was mistaken,*'" replied Whistler.

"What is there so very hard to pronounce about them?" inquired his father, with affected simplicity.

"It is n't the words that are hard, — it 's the *sentiment*," replied Whistler. "Our teacher told us that some great man once said those were the three hardest words to pronounce in the English language. He told us, besides, of a great general who was defeated in battle, and who sat down and wrote to the senate: 'I have just lost a great battle, and it was entirely my own fault.' He said that confession displayed more greatness than a victory."

"That is very true," added Mr. Davenport. "But have you learned to pronounce the words yourself? If you have, you have learned something worth knowing."

"I don't know," replied Whistler, with some hesitation.

"The item of knowledge you have picked up to-day," continued his father, "will not be of much benefit to you, unless you make a practical use of it. Your teacher, I suppose, wished to teach you the duty of confessing your errors. That is one of the hardest things a man ever has to do. It takes a brave man to confess that he has done wrong, or has embraced wrong opinions."

"I've learned another thing to-day," continued Whistler; "I've learned how much meanness there is in the world."

"Ah, you *have* made an important acquisition!" said his father. "I've lived in the world forty years, and I haven't begun to find out all its meanness yet."

"Well, if I haven't found it all out, I've found enough," resumed Whistler. "This was the way it happened. Two or three boys of our class came to me, this morning, and wanted me to sign a petition asking the teacher to give us shorter lessons. About a dozen boys had signed it, but they wanted me to put my name before theirs, at the head of the petition, because I was one of the oldest boys. As soon as I found what it was for, I told them I didn't think our lessons were too long, and I shouldn't sign it. Then they all set upon me, and coaxed and flattered as hard as they could. They said they were so sure that I would sign it that they had left a place for my name, and that I should have more influence with the master than they, &c., &c. And when they found that that wouldn't work, then they tried to bully me into it. Nat Clapp said I needn't pretend to be a better

scholar than the rest of them, for I had as hard work to get my lessons as any body did. Jo Clark said I would n't sign it because they did n't consult me about it before they got it up. Bill Morehead said I did n't dare to sign it. I told him I dared to refuse to sign it, and I thought that was more than some of them could say. But I can't tell you half what they said. I got real provoked at last. I should like to know if I had n't as good a right *not* to sign that petition as any of them had to sign it? What business had they to say my motives were bad, because I did n't please to do just as they wanted me to?"

"How much boys are like men!" quietly remarked his father.

"But you did n't sign the petition after all, did you?" inquired Clinton.

"No, that I did n't," replied Whistler; "and I was glad enough of it, too, this afternoon. They could n't get but about a third of the class to sign it, and they left it on the teacher's desk this noon. He did n't say anything about it till just as school was about to be dismissed at night. Then he told the scholars that he had received a petition for shorter lessons from a portion

of the first class. He said the request was not only unreasonable, but the petition was disrespectful in tone, and he considered it insulting. He said most of the boys who had signed it were the idlest fellows in the class, and, he supposed, they would like it better if he would give them no lessons at all. But, he said, there were one or two names on the petition that he was surprised to see there. He talked pretty hard to them, I can tell you. He said every boy that had put his name to it deserved to be called out and punished; but he concluded to let them off, this time, with merely reading their names aloud to the school. So he read off the list; and if some of the fellows did n't feel cheap enough, then I 'm no judge, that 's all!"

"Did any body sign it that I know, except Nat?" inquired Clinton.

"Yes, there was one other boy that you know; but I shan't tell you who he is," replied Whistler.

Clinton did not feel much curiosity in the matter, and did not press the inquiry. The boy referred to was Ralph Preston, who had thoughtlessly yielded to the solicitations of his comrades, and affixed his name to the petition, without noticing that it was not couched

in respectful terms. He felt the public reprimand of the act very keenly; and Whistler, out of friendship for him, kindly abstained from giving any further notoriety to his error.

"Well, Clinton," said Mr. Davenport, after a short pause, "you 've explored our city pretty thoroughly,—now let us have your judgment upon it. What do you think of it, on the whole?"

"O, I like it very well!" replied Clinton.

"That is rather faint praise," observed his uncle.

"I like some things very much," continued Clinton, "and others I don't like so well."

"On the whole, don't you feel quite willing to go back to the country?" inquired his aunt.

"I don't know but I do," replied Clinton, with some hesitation.

"I see you have n't wholly given up the idea of being a merchant, yet," remarked his uncle.

"O no, sir, I was n't thinking of that!" replied Clinton. "But I should like to enjoy some of the opportunities that boys have here,—good schools, and plenty of books, and lectures, and everything else."

"These privileges or opportunities are very valu-

able, I know," added Mr. Davenport; "but, after all, don't you know that the making of a man is not in opportunities, but in himself? If you determine to be a man, the lack of opportunities will not keep you back. You will work and struggle till you have overcome every obstacle. On the other hand, if you haven't this strong will within, all the opportunities in the world won't make a man of you. Indeed, there is such a thing as having too much assistance. If you set out a tree, and keep forever handling it, and scratching about it, and trying to help it grow, it won't come to much. It needs a little wholesome neglect to teach it to take care of itself. So, if a man wants to produce a strong, rugged character, he must n't go into a hothouse to do it. Such a thing won't grow there. So far as I can judge, Clinton, you are doing very well with your present opportunities. Make the most of them, and I think you will get along as well as most boys in the city, to say the least."

"But I don't have much time to study," added Clinton.

"Many men have stored their minds with valuable information," continued his uncle, "in odd moments

snatched from their labors. Two of the most learned men, in many respects, that I ever met with, did this. One of them is Elihu Burritt, the 'Learned Blacksmith,' who acquired more languages at the anvil than I can remember the names of. The other is Charles C. Frost, of Brattleboro', Vermont, who deserves to be called the 'Learned Shoemaker.' I must read you a short account of Mr. Frost, to show you what can be done in *one hour a day.*"

So saying, Mr. Davenport took down a volume from the bookcase, and read as follows:

"At fourteen years of age, Mr. Frost left school, and commenced learning the trade of a shoemaker. He worked as an apprentice in his father's shop seven years, when he shortly after became interested in the business of making and vending shoes, in a neat and tasteful shoe store, on his own account. He early evinced a love of mathematical science, and has displayed talents of no ordinary character in its pursuit. He says, in a letter which I have received from him: 'I early imbibed a love of study. I recollect my first acquisitions were in Arithmetic, and that the results gave me the highest pleasure. When I excelled other boys in the school, my progress was attributed by them to some peculiar mathematical talent. But it

was not so. I boast of no genius. I attribute my success uniformly to more study than others gave their lessons or work, and, perhaps, to a greater *love* of study.' Mr. Frost has found time, not only to become master of all existing forms of algebraic numbers, but is also familiarly and thoroughly acquainted with Geometry, Trigonometry and Astronomy. He is at home in the Modern Calculus and in the Principia of Newton, where few of our learned professors venture, or feel at ease. Indeed, in mathematical science he has made so great attainments that it is doubtful whether there can be found ten mathematicians in the United States who are capable, in case of his own embarrassment, of lending him any relief. Remember that we are speaking of a self-taught scholar, and he no genius. Let me tell you how it was done. He says: 'When I went to my trade, at fourteen years of age, I formed a resolution, which I have kept till now, — extraordinary preventives only excepted, — that I would faithfully devote *one hour each day* to study, in some useful branch of knowledge.' Here is the secret of his success. He is now forty-five years of age, and is a married man, the father of three children; yet this *one-hour* rule accompanies him to this day. 'The first book which fell into my hands,' he says, 'was Hutton's Mathematics, an English work of great celebrity, a complete mathematical course, which I then commenced, — namely, at fourteen. I finished it at nineteen, without an instructor. I then took up those

studies to which I could apply my knowledge of Mathematics, as Mechanics and Mathematical Astronomy. I think I can say that I possess, and have successfully studied, *all* the most approved English and American works on these subjects.' After this, he commenced Natural Philosophy and Physical Astronomy. Then Chemistry, Geology, and Mineralogy, collecting and arranging a cabinet. 'Next Natural History,' he says, 'engaged my attention, which I followed up with close observations, gleaning my information from a great many sources. The works that treat of them at large are rare and expensive. But I have a considerable knowledge of Geology, Ornithology, Entomology, and Conchology.' Not only this; he has added to his stores of knowledge the whole science of Botany, one of the most extensive now pursued, and has made himself completely master of it. He has made actual extensive surveys, in his own state, of the trees, shrubs, herbs, ferns, mosses, lichens, and fungi. Mr. Frost thinks that he may possess the *third* best collection of ferns in the United States. He has also turned his attention to Meteorology, and devotes much of his time, as do also Olmstead, Maury, Redfield, Smith, Loomis, Mitchell, and many others, to acquire a knowledge of the law of storms, and the movements of the erratic and extraordinary bodies in the air and heavens. He has also been driven to the study of Latin, and reads it with great freedom. He has read and owns most of the gifted poets, and is, to a considerable extent,

familiar with History; while his miscellaneous reading has been very extensive. He says of his books: 'I have a library, which I divide into three departments, —scientific, religious, literary,— comprising the standard works published in this country, containing five or six hundred volumes. I have purchased these books, from time to time, with money saved for the purpose by some small self-denials.'

"Here, then, we have an account — I assure you it is wholly reliable — of one, a plain man of forty-five, who has made the compass, so to speak, of the hill of science, studying his HOUR a day, when the day's labor was done, for more than thirty consecutive years. He began this one-hour system when he was fourteen years old. Behold the result! Here is a man with the cares, business, and responsibilities of life on his hands, yet a devoted, faithful, successful student; a man who is a profound scholar, and yet a plain-spoken, humble, pious, laboring man, residing still in his native village, far inland, supporting himself by his trade and daily labor, while he is worthy of a position as a teacher in one of the best institutions of learning in the land." *

"There," resumed Mr. Davenport, closing the book, "you see what a man can do in only one hour a day, diligently improved. Don't you think you might

* "Dreams and Realities in the Life of a Pastor and Teacher." 1856.

manage to devote that amount of time to study, Clinton?"

"Yes, sir, I suppose I could," replied Clinton.

"Do you suppose every body could learn as much as Mr. Frost knows, if they should try as hard?" inquired Whistler.

"I suppose any man of fair natural powers, who should study as earnestly and perseveringly as he did, would be about as successful," replied Mr. Davenport. "But, after all, we must aim at something higher than success. We cannot all be great, or learned, or rich, or eloquent; but we can all be what is better, — we can be good men and women. Indeed, without a good character, all other gifts and acquirements only make a man the more dangerous. And character, you know, is formed by little and little. It is the result of a great multitude of little thoughts, and acts, and emotions, all spun together into a complete fabric. Did you ever go into a ropewalk, Clinton?"

"Yes, sir; Willie and I went through the ropewalk in the Navy Yard," replied Clinton.

"Well," resumed his uncle, "the process of making character is something like making a cable. First,

there are the little fine fibres of hemp; a great mass of these, twisted together, become yarn; several yarns make a strand; three strands make a rope; and three

ropes make a small cable. A fibre of hemp is a very small and weak affair; but twist enough of them together, and they will hold the largest ship in the gale. So the little trifling acts and habits of the child seem very insignificant; but, by-and-by, when they

are spun into character, they will become as strong as cables. Look out now, boys, and see that the little fibres, and yarns, and strands, are all right; and in due time the great ropes and cables will appear, and will hold the anchor fast, when you are overtaken by the storms of life.

"There, I have spun you out quite a speech; and a pretty eloquent one, too! — eh, Whistler? Well, the fact is, I've been addressing a jury this afternoon, and I have n't had time to shake the kinks of oratory out of my tongue, yet. Ettie, darling, did my fine speech put you to sleep? Never mind, — don't disturb her. We shall have to follow her example before long, if we mean to see Clinton off in the morning."

The family retired at an early hour; and the next morning Clinton bade them good-by, and set out for Brookdale.

THE END.

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